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ABSTRACT

This publication provides a step-by-step guide to help schools and districts implement strong, sustainable professional development that drives achievement of student learning goals. The toolkit is based on the experiences of national professional development award winning schools and districts. The most common thread among the winners is that most of them underwent significant change in the 1990s, focusing either on whole-school reform or major professional development changes. This guide tells schools and teachers how to get involved, put ideas into action, prepare to work hard and work collaboratively, recognize that it is not necessary to be an expert, and use a variety of resources. The toolkit focuses on four important steps: designing professional development; implementing professional development; evaluating and improving professional development; and sharing professional development learning. Four appendixes present U.S. Department of Education award criteria and actions, professional development resources, national awards program for model professional development winner profiles, and what the research says about professional development that works. Fourteen action planner tools are included. (Contains 41 references.) (SM)

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A Toolkit for Schools and Districts Based on Model Professional Development Award Winners

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: LEARNING FROM THE BEST

A TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS BASED ON THE NATIONAL AWARDS PROGRAM FOR MODEL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By Emily Hassel

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Congratulations to all Model Professional Development Award Winners, 1997–1999

1996-97

Lawrence Public Schools, Lawrence, Kansas

Samuel W. Mason Elementary School, Roxbury, Massachusetts

San Francisco Unified School District, San Francisco, California

Wilton Public Schools, Wilton, Connecticut

Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, Manhattan, Kansas

1997-98

Ganado Intermediate School, Patagonia, Arizona

Geneva City Schools, Geneva, New York

H.D. Hilley Elementary School, El Paso, Texas

Hungerford School, Staten Island, New York

The International High School at LaGuardia Community College, Long Island, NY

Lewisville Independent School District, Lewisville, Texas

Montview Elementary School, Aurora, Colorado

Shallowford Falls Elementary School, Marietta, Georgia

1998-99

Carroll Independent School District, Southlake, Texas

Edmonds School District No. 15, Lynnwood, Washington

Norman Public Schools, Norman, Oklahoma

Olathe District Schools, Olathe, Kansas

Sprayberry High School, Marietta, Georgia

Spring Woods Senior High School, Houston, Texas

Wherry Elementary School, Albuquerque, New Mexico

About the Author

Emily Hassel is codirector of Public Impact, a Charlotte, North Carolina-based education policy and management firm. Emily previously worked as a consultant and manager for the Hay Group, an international human resources consulting firm. At Hay, she worked with a variety of industries in the public and private sectors, where she helped clients establish more effective people-management practices to achieve desired organization results. Her recent work in education includes authoring *If the Shoe Fits*, a guide to help school leaders consider alternative school designs, published by the Charter Friends National Network (CFNN); coauthoring the *Sourcebook for Charter School Planning Workshops* (also for CFNN); and authoring people-management training tools for a public school leadership institute organized by SERVE, the Southeastern federal regional educational laboratory. Emily received her master's degree in Business Administration and law degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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- **Lucy Steiner,** a consultant with Public Impact, who conducts research and writes on school improvement.
- **Bryan Hassel,** founder and codirector of Public Impact, who writes and consults widely on public school reform.

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Goals	• How professional development supports the school/district long-term plan (page 15) • Professional development goals (page 25)
Needs Assessment (i.e., What kind of professional development do you need?)	• The professional development needs assessment process (page 19)
Activities	• Professional development content, process, and activities and how each supports the goals (page 31)
Research	• Research that supports chosen content/process for professional development (page 37) • Staying abreast and incorporating best practices in teaching, learning, and leadership (page 53) • What the research says about professional development that works (page 93)
Money (and Other Resources)	• Resources available to support professional development (page 41) • Ensuring that resources remain available to organize and implement professional development (page 59)
Time	• Making sure school/district policies and practices support actual professional development implementation for staff in schools (page 55) • Making professional development part of everyday life at school (page 61)
Evaluation	• Professional development evaluation steps (page 45) • Evaluating and improving professional development (page 65) • Professional development needs assessment process (page 19)
Communications	• Including participants and organizers in the professional development design process (page 9) • Sharing the plan with the school community (page 49) • Sharing professional development learning (page 73)
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Available Online

This toolkit, materials used by award winners, and other useful professional development resources are available on NCREL's Web site at **www.ncrel.org/pd/.** To request additional print copies of this toolkit, call NCREL's Order Department at 800-356-2735 or visit our online catalog at www.ncrel.org/catalog/.

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INTRODUCTION

Professional development is the process of improving staff skills and competencies needed to produce outstanding educational results for students.

"I know that professional development is essential to improving student learning. But changing professional development so that we really make a difference in student learning is a huge and uncertain endeavor."

If your thoughts are like these, and you are working either within a school or at the district level, this toolkit was written for you. The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) is pleased to present *Professional Development: Learning From the Best,* a step-by-step guide to help you implement strong, sustainable professional development that drives achievement of your student learning goals. The toolkit is based on the experiences of national professional development award winners. It is designed to help you use their ideas and lessons to tailor your professional development to the unique vision, goals, students, and teachers of your school or district.

Model Professional Development Awards

In 1996, the U.S. Department of Education established the National Awards Program for Model Professional Development to recognize schools and districts leading the nation in professional development. In the first three years (1997-1999), 20 winners have been selected throughout the United States.

The criteria for selection focus on the content of professional development (PD), the process used to create and implement PD, and the staff and student learning results achieved. As the lessons of winning schools and districts show, *content and process are inextricably linked in determining the level of impact professional development has on student learning.* (The toolkit presents the criteria in a step-by-step format; see Appendix A for full award criteria.)

Winners have gone far beyond ensuring good professional development workshops. They have made professional development a critical contributor to school performance and, thus, inextricably linked and aligned the two. Award winners have clarified school educational goals, increased teacher accountability for linking classroom activity to student results, and significantly improved the process for selecting the professional development that teachers need to get results. As important, these schools have used best practices in organization and team design.

The Award Winners Are Just Like Your School or District

The award winners represented in this toolkit (from years 1996-97, 1997-98, and 1998-99) span the range of public elementary and secondary education in the United States. Represented are urban, rural, and suburban schools; traditional and innovative curricula; special needs schools, highly diverse schools, and highly similar population schools; schools with tremendous resources to focus on PD and schools with very little "extra"; and schools from across the racial and socioeconomic spectrums. (See Appendix C for brief profiles of winners.) *Whatever the makeup of your school or district, chances are very good that one or more of the award winners is similar to you in many respects.*

The most common thread (aside from outstanding PD) is this: most of these winners underwent *significant change* in the 1990s, focusing either on whole-school reform or, in some cases, major professional development changes. Thus their lessons include wisdom about high-impact professional development and the change process it took to get there. In this way, their experiences are instructive for any institution considering changes in professional development.

How This Guide Was Developed

This guide is based on the extensive award applications submitted by winners, reports by site visitors who helped select the award winners, interviews with PD organizers in award-winning schools and districts (1996-97 and 1997-98 winners), and review of PD organizing tools used by winners. The author analyzed these sources for common themes and good ideas applicable to other schools and districts.

Rather than present the findings school-by-school or district-by-district, this toolkit pulls out the key lessons *across* the schools and districts and organizes them into a step-by-step process you can use to meet the U.S. Department of Education award criteria. (See Appendix B for other helpful PD resources.)

Overview

This toolkit takes the best practices of award-winning schools and organizes them into a step-by-step planner for designing and implementing professional development. It digs beneath the award criteria and tells us how award winners did it. For example, we know that getting teachers involved in professional development design is one award criterion. This guide tells you specifically how award winners got teachers involved. It also will help you follow these important strategies:

- **Put Your Ideas Into Action.** The goal of this guide is to help schools and districts move from *thinking* about change to *doing* it. The guide provides tools to lead professional development change in your own school or district. Specifically, an Organizers' Checklist and series of Action Planning Tools help you identify key decisions you need to make.
- **Prepare to Work Hard—and Together.** Leading important change is always challenging. Overcoming obstacles takes a craving for excellence, creative effort, attention to details, high levels of persuasion, and just the right balance between patience and determination. Few individuals can do all of these all the time. That is one good reason why the award winners presented here drew on the skills and talents of several people to lead change. The award winners caution that even by sharing the challenge, they had to work hard.
- **Recognize That You Do Not Need to Be an "Expert."** Most change leaders in winning organizations were not professional development "experts." Typically, they were teachers, principals, and other staff concerned about student learning. Most learned about professional development by conducting research and tapping the knowledge of experts. You, too, can build your knowledge of professional development to improve results in your school or district. If you and your colleagues need to develop basic knowledge of professional development, explore the resources in Appendix B, and plan to spend more time in the research phase of professional development design.
- **Use Our Resources.** This guide provides other resources to support your professional development. Appendices include the full award criteria matched with the action steps presented in this guide (Appendix A); resources for staying current in professional development (primarily Web sites) (Appendix B); brief profiles of award-winning organizations (Appendix C); and a literature review showing why the award criteria have led to great results in schools (Appendix D).

After you read this guide, you can expect to know:

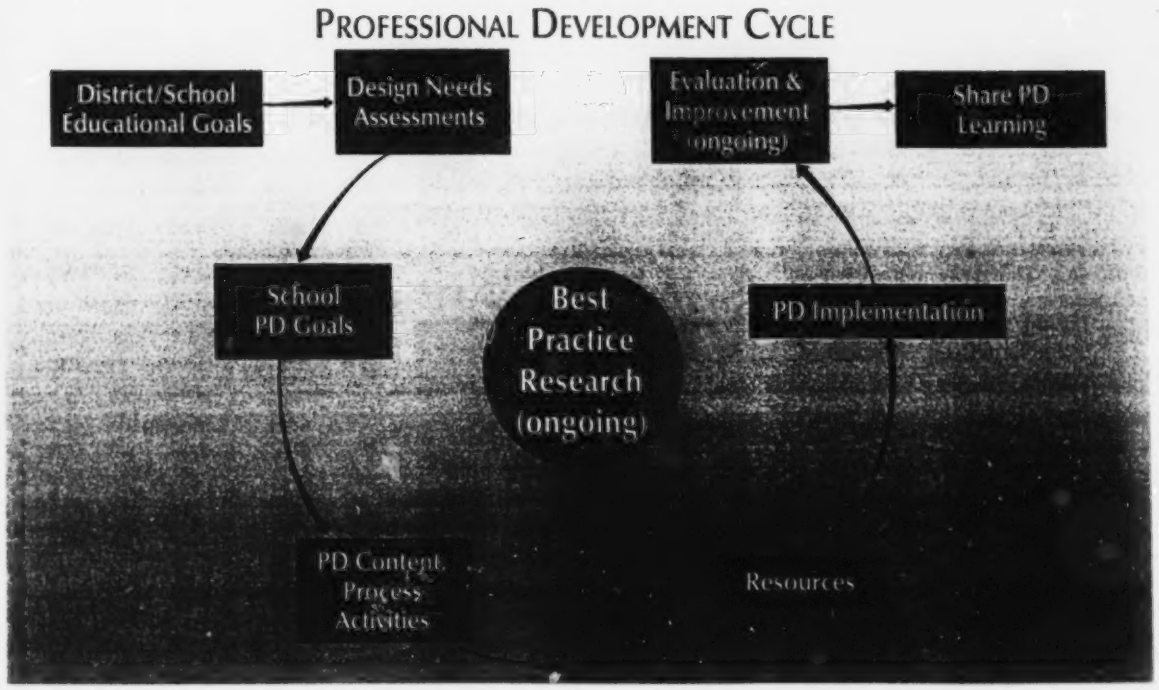
- Key "how to" lessons from award-winning schools.
- Your action steps for leading professional development change in your school or district.

For many award winners, the process of changing professional development was a major learning event in itself.

A Step-By-Step Professional Development Planner

This toolkit walks you through the steps for designing and implementing professional development. It begins with an Organizers' Checklist that summarizes the major decisions and actions from design through evaluation and improvement. Then it is organized into four sections: Designing Professional Development, Implementing Professional Development, Evaluating and Improving Professional Development, and Sharing Professional Development Learning. These sections follow the steps in the professional development cycle (see Figure 1).

Figure 1



Quick References

Throughout this toolkit, you will see references to key concepts in the margins. Use them to focus your thoughts and refresh your memory.

Technology— opportunities to use technology in support of your professional development efforts

Sustaining Professional Development— opportunities to ensure that your changes endure

Take Action!— organizers' checklists

Evaluation— evaluation and related opportunities

The *Design* section walks you through the elements of a complete professional development plan, including both content issues (what your plan should include) and process (how to organize yourselves). The success of what you do later is largely determined by how well you have planned. Design inherently includes planning to implement, evaluate, and share your ideas. Thus, this section gives detailed information about some topics also addressed later in the toolkit.

Other sections are equally important for sustained success. Implementation ultimately is as critical as design to good professional development. The *Implementation* section highlights success factors and shows you how to achieve them. *Evaluation and Improvement* outlines critical components of this part of professional development and reminds us that evaluation should flow directly from the planning process. Both the award criteria and this section go beyond simple measurement into how evaluation data are used to keep up with the changing world. The final section, *Sharing Professional Development Learning*, provides two simple steps that will make sharing your successes easier.

Each section has from two to four parts: Themes From Award Winners, Examples From Award Winners, Organizers' Checklists, and Action Planning Tools. Themes will help you quickly understand common highlights of winners' professional development. Examples will give you a sense of the variety of ways winners met the award criteria based on their own school/district goals and resources; each award winner appears in at least one of the examples. The Organizers' Checklists include action steps and decisions you will need. Action Planning Tools will help you organize and summarize your work with a team. Each tool includes an example from a school perspective.

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Professional Development Action Planner: Organizers' Checklist

Instructions:

Use this checklist to plan your organizing steps and meetings. Use Action Planner Tool 2 to document decisions and plan next steps wherever it is helpful.

Step One: Designing Professional Development

1. **Include professional development participants and organizers in the professional development design process.**

   - ❑ Decide who should be involved in the initial PD design working team. (Use Tool 1, Parts A and B.)
   - ❑ Decide what role other stakeholders will have in PD design, both initial and ongoing. (Use Tool 1, Parts A and B.)
   - ❑ Invite/notify stakeholders to participate in PD design.
   - ❑ Determine leadership roles for the PD design working team.
   - ❑ Determine the process for the PD design working team: When should you meet? Who will schedule meetings? What do you need in advance and who will provide it? Who will collect and distribute additional agenda items and supporting material? Are standing meetings mandatory? What happens if someone cannot attend? Who will "facilitate" the meeting to ensure that you prioritize and get through all critical agenda items? How will you make decisions—by consensus, vote, or other? Under what circumstances will you make decisions outside of group meetings? How? Who is responsible for communicating decisions to those who cannot participate? What will each of you do when a decision or action with which you disagree is made without your participation? Other issues?
   - ❑ Create a standing agenda for all PD working team meetings, including updates on work in progress, new issues/problems, identification of preparatory work for next meeting, communication (who needs to be informed of decisions made in this meeting), and documents from this meeting that need to be saved in the main file.

2. **Make a clear plan that includes:**

   a. **How professional development supports the school/district's long-term plan.**

   - ❑ Review existing educational goals for the state, district, and school.
   - ❑ "Map" district and school educational goals to ensure they are linked. (Use Tool 3.)
   - ❑ Make a plan for linking team and individual classroom *educational* (not PD) goals to school goals in the future, including who will ensure linkage, when, and using what tools, and who will review and approve the goals. (Use Tool 3.)

   b. **A professional development needs assessment process.**

   - ❑ Plan and implement a student needs assessment process. (Use Tool 4.)
   - ❑ Identify expert sources to assist with needs assessment, if required.
   - ❑ Choose comparison groups.

- ❑ Choose sources of data, both existing and customized.
- ❑ Develop tools as needed to gather data.
- ❑ Gather data.
- ❑ Complete a summary of student needs after student assessments are complete. (Use Tool 4.)
- ❑ Plan a teacher/staff needs assessment process. (Use Tool 5.)
- ❑ Identify expert sources to assist with staff needs assessment, if required.
- ❑ Identify staff skills/competencies needed to close student achievement gaps.
- ❑ Identify the *actual* skill/competency level of staff.
- ❑ Complete a summary of your staff's gaps and strengths after assessments are complete. (Use Tool 5.)

c. Professional development goals.

- ❑ Create professional development principles (general goals and parameters). (Use Tool 6.)
- ❑ Create professional development objectives (specific goals). (Use Tools 3, 5, and 7.)

d. Professional development content, process, and activities.

- ❑ Plan a process for selecting PD content and activities at each organization level (district, school, team, and individual staff). (Use Tool 8.)
- ❑ Complete the following tasks for each organization level:
  - ❑ Identify specific PD content required to meet each PD goal. (Use Tool 9.)
  - ❑ Identify potential activities to learn PD content. (Use Tool 9.)
  - ❑ Research potential activities. (Use Tools 9 and 10.)
  - ❑ Select activities at each organizational level. (Use Tools 9 and 10.)

e. Research that supports the chosen content/process for professional development.

- ❑ Include research into best practices in the initial PD design. (Use Tools 9 and 10.)

f. Resources available to support professional development.

- ❑ Identify sources and uses of financial resources. (Use Tool 11.)
- ❑ Identify needs and sources of expertise for each selected PD activity. (Use Tool 9.)
- ❑ Identify needs and sources of expertise for PD design, implementation, and evaluation processes as needed. (Use Tool 9.)
- ❑ Identify needs and sources for PD-related facilities. (Use Tool 9.)

g. Professional development evaluation steps.

- ❑ Identify success measures for each PD goal and each supporting activity. (Use Tool 12.)
- ❑ Identify data sources and gathering method for each measure. (Use Tool 12.)
- ❑ Plan a process for reporting evaluation findings. (Use Tool 12.)
- ❑ Determine who will lead the process for making PD improvement. (Use Tool 12.)

3. **Share the plan.**

- ❑ Make a plan for ongoing communications, including information about the initial PD plan, with the school community. (Use Tools 1 and 13.)

Step Two: Implementing Professional Development

- ❑ Stay abreast of and incorporate best practices into teaching, learning, and leadership. (Use Tools 10 and 14.)
- ❑ Make sure school/district policies and practices support actual PD implementation for staff in schools. (Use Tool 14.)
- ❑ Identify critical factors for successful implementation into your school/district.
- ❑ Identify an ongoing process for ensuring successful implementation and problem solving.
- ❑ Ensure that resources remain available to organize and implement PD. (Use Tool 14.)
- ❑ Identify opportunities to make PD part of everyday school life; revisit periodically to improve. (Use Tool 14.)

Step Three: Evaluating and Improving Professional Development

- ❑ Ensure implementation of the evaluation plan. (Use Tool 12.)
- ❑ Schedule time to review and improve the evaluation process after the first round of evaluation/ improvement.

Step Four: Sharing Professional Development Learning

- ❑ Keep records of PD decisions to guide future decisions.
- ❑ Keep implementation materials organized and available to others.

Step One:
Designing Professional Development

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Designing Professional Development

Overview

Good professional development design includes both strong *content* and an effective *process* for making initial and ongoing decisions. Relevant content is essential to ensuring that PD helps you meet student learning goals. But good PD content without a strong decision-making and organizational process to support it will be short-lived. The award-winning steps for successful professional development design are summarized below:

1. Include participants and organizers in the PD design process.
2. Make a clear plan that includes:
   - **a.** How PD supports the school/district's long-term plan.
   - **b.** A PD needs assessment process.
   - **c.** PD goals, including at least the following: improving all students' learning, improving teacher effectiveness, setting high standards for teachers, promoting continuous staff learning, and enhancing staff intellectual and leadership capacity.
   - **d.** PD content, process, and activities and how each supports the goals.
   - **e.** Research that supports the chosen content/process for PD.
   - **f.** Resources available to support PD.
   - **g.** PD evaluation steps.
3. Share the plan with the school community.

Award winners ensured that key stakeholders had a voice in professional development from the start.

Stakeholders are all of the individuals and groups who might have an interest in how schools are run and in the impact schools have on staff, children, families, and the community.

Include Participants and Organizers in the Professional Development Design Process

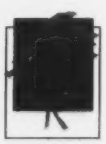
Themes From Award Winners

Award winners have used a variety of processes for including critical stakeholders in decisions about professional development. They identify three basic participation decisions that need to be made:

Decide who is included in decisions. People who have input into the PD design process typically include some combination of the following: students, teachers, other staff, parents, principals, district PD staff, district management (e.g., superintendents), community members, and expert resources (e.g., professors, consultants).

Using a team to design professional development helps ensure a broad base of leadership for sustaining PD changes.

The working team is the group of people who hammer out the details of the proposed professional development plan and ensure that everyone is kept informed.



Be sure to clarify who will be responsible for improving PD after the initial design stage.

Decide what types of input each group or person has. The types of input groups or people may have include final decision-making authority; active involvement in developing design details (working team); input of ideas, either up-front or in review of proposed plans; and being informed about decisions and progress, but with no specific forum for providing input.

Schools and districts may use different types of input at different stages. For example, in several award-winning organizations, small teams developed the initial PD plan, but many more people participated in ongoing decisions about specific PD goals and activities.

The breadth of participation and level of decision-making authority for PD typically reflect the overall management structure and approach of each school and district. Organizations with more *centralized* PD control tend to be ones with more centralized management, accountability, and budgets. Organizations that put more PD control into staff hands tend to have more decentralized management, accountability, and budgets. It is important to note that award winners have aligned their PD decision process with the overall management process.

Decide what level of professional development design is affected by each participant group. The levels of professional development design typically are districtwide PD, schoolwide PD, team-level PD (e.g., grade-level teams, content-area teams), and individual PD.

As you prepare to lead change in your school or district's professional development, consider all of these issues. **Action Planner Tool 1** should help you clarify the decisions you need to make about how to include others in the PD design process. You can use this matrix for initial PD planning and for ongoing PD design changes. Use **Action Planner Tool 2** here and later for your general planning needs.

Examples From Award Winners

- In one school, three teachers took the lead, gained support from the principal, and got expert advice from local university staff to plan the initial framework for PD. Now that the new PD process has been implemented, all staff members provide up-front input (via annual surveys) and help make decisions (in large-group meetings). This approach worked well because staff members were skeptical of change and needed to see results before participating actively.
- In one district, a committee of school and community representatives, with the help of a university consultant, initially developed a needs assessment survey to identify overall goals for the district. These goals drive decisions about curriculum and PD offerings. Both school leadership teams and teacher study teams can propose PD topics and courses (as well as have input into school goals). A district-level committee with representatives from all schools makes the ultimate decisions about curriculum and PD offerings.
- In another school, six cross-disciplinary staff teams propose *schoolwide* PD to the school's Coordinating Council. The council consists of a representative from each team plus administrators, the union leader,

office staff, students, and parents. This group recommends action to the Steering Committee, composed of administrators, the Coordinating Council chair, and the union leader. Team-level PD is decided by the cross-disciplinary teams, each of which has its own PD budget. In addition, each staff member develops an individual development plan.

- Another school created a "Schoolwide Leadership Cadre," which included the principal, teachers, parents, community members, and central office staff. This working team led the entire professional development cycle that included planning, research, implementation, evaluation, analysis, and improvement. Because of the knowledge they developed during this process, the cadre members also acted as teacher-leaders, staff developers, mentors, and champions for school improvement.

Organizers' Checklist

Include Participants and Organizers in the Professional Development Design Process

- ❑ Decide who should be involved in the initial PD design working team. (Use Tool 1.)
- ❑ Decide what role other stakeholders will have in PD design, both initial and ongoing. (Use Tool 1.)
- ❑ Invite/notify stakeholders to participate in PD design as decided.

❑ Determine leadership roles for the PD design working team.

❑ Determine the process for the PD design working team: When should you meet? Who will schedule meetings? What do you need in advance and who will provide it? Who will collect and distribute agenda items and supporting material? Are standing meetings mandatory? What happens if someone cannot attend—who updates, etc.? Who will ensure that you prioritize and get through all critical agenda items? How will you make decisions—by consensus, vote, or other? Under what circumstances will you make decisions outside of group meetings? How? Who is responsible for communicating decisions to those who cannot participate? What will each of you do when a decision or action with which you disagree is made without your participation? Other issues?

❑ Create a standing agenda for all PD working team meetings, including, at least, updates on work in progress; new issues/problems; identification of preparatory work for the next meeting; communication (who needs to be informed of decisions made in this meeting?); and documents from this meeting that need to be saved in the main file.

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Action Planner Tool 1, Part A—
Professional Development Design Stakeholder Summary

Instructions: Fill in the name(s) of the person(s) completing the tool and the date of the final version. Indicate whether you are discussing initial or ongoing PD design participation. Indicate the level for which you are planning PD design participation. Note: You may decide later who will participate in team and individual PD design, as this may depend on the district- and school-level PD design. Review the list of PD design stakeholders in the left column and modify as needed. Next, complete Tool 1, Part B, then fill in the summary below. Finally, review the summary to ensure that you have clarified how all stakeholder groups will be involved in PD design.

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Check One: ❑ Initial PD Design ❑ Ongoing PD Design

Organization Level *(check one)*: ❑ District ❑ School ❑ Team ❑ Individual

Stakeholders	Summary of Role(s) in PD Design
Example: *Teachers*	**Representatives:** *Instruction team leaders on working team make final decisions* **All:** *Get initial input via survey; keep informed of progress in regular weekly staff meeting*
Teachers	**Representatives:** **All:**
Other School Staff	**Representatives:** **All:**
Principal	
District Staff	**Representatives:** **All:**
District Management	**Representatives:** **All:**
Students	**Representatives:** **All:**
Parents	**Representatives:** **All:**
Community	**Representatives:** **All:**
Experts	
Other	
Other	

Action Planner Tool 1, Part B—
Professional Development Design Participation Planner

Instructions: Fill in the name(s) of the person(s) completing the tool and the date of the final version. Indicate whether you are discussing initial or ongoing PD design participation. Indicate the level for which you are planning PD design participation. Looking at the list of stakeholders from Part A, answer the questions below. Next, review the stakeholder list in Part A to ensure you have considered all stakeholders. Finally, summarize your decisions in Part A.

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Check One: ❑ Initial PD Design ❑ Ongoing PD Design

Organization Level *(check one)*: ❑ District ❑ School ❑ Team ❑ Individual

Who will participate on the working team to develop PD design details?

Stakeholder group	All or representatives?	How are representatives chosen?
Example: *Teachers*	*Reps*	*Instructional Team Leaders*

Who will have input into PD design, up front or in review (e.g., via survey, focus group)?

Stakeholder group	All or representatives?	How are reps chosen?	How is input obtained?
Example: *Teachers*	*All*	*N/A*	*Initial survey*

Who will have authority to make final decisions about PD design?

Stakeholder group	All or representatives?	How are representatives chosen?
Example: *Teachers*	*Reps*	*Instructional team leaders*

Who else will we keep informed of our design decisions and progress?

Stakeholder group	All or representatives?	How are reps chosen?	How is input obtained?
Example: *Teachers*	*All*	*N/A*	*Initial survey*

Action Planner Tool 2—
Action Accountability Planner

Instructions: Complete each row for action steps where you are assigning specific accountability. Copy and distribute this form to all team members immediately after meetings. Note: This form can be used as substitute for traditional meeting minutes.

Team: _____ Date: _____

Action Step	By Whom	With Help From	Status Report Due	Deadline
Example: *Get commitment from instruction team leaders to serve on PD design team*	*Jane T. (principal)*	*Richard S. (teacher in organizing meeting)*	*1 week*	*1 week*

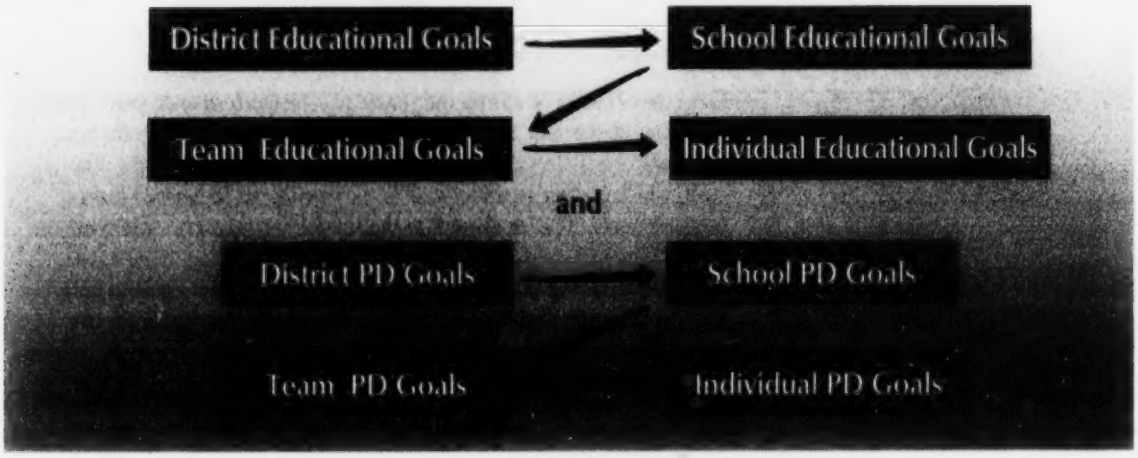
Make a Clear Plan That Includes How Professional Development Supports the School/District's Long-Term Plan

Award winners embedded professional development goals in district and school educational goals.

Themes From Award Winners

Make a plan. The first and most important learning theme from award winners is that they made planning a priority even though it takes time, tremendous mental energy, and coordination of resources. They carved out staff, leader, and volunteer time to ensure that PD *focused on the student learning results they really wanted.*

Align educational and professional development goals at all levels. In award-winning schools and districts, both student learning goals (educational goals) and staff learning goals (PD goals) that are further "upstream" drive those "downstream." That is, district educational goals help determine school educational goals, which help determine instructional team educational goals, which help determine student learning goals for individual teachers.



Educational goals target *student learning* (and sometimes family and community) outcomes. They are driven by a variety of factors, such as selected state or national standards, current achievement level of students, and the educational vision of the school or district.

PD goals are the staff learning goals. They are driven primarily by the gaps between educational goals and actual student learning, the skills that staff members need to close those gaps, and the current staff skill level. (In some cases, individual staff career interests also influence selection of individual-level PD goals.) Some of the award winners' "PD goals" look very much like "educational goals," which helps ensure that PD always stays linked to student outcomes.

The specific planning process to ensure linkage between district educational goals and school-level PD goals varied. In some cases, schools built PD goals directly off district-level PD goals. In others, schools started the PD planning process with district educational goals. Either way, award-winning schools and districts ensured that school-level PD (including team and individual PD) ultimately supported district educational goals.

Examples From Award Winners

- In one large urban school district, the results of student performance on a number of standardized tests define the following years' priorities. These results and consequential priorities are reported to the school community in an annual "state of the district" address. Schools within the district must choose three priorities from the district list that best fit each school's needs. Schools also are required to create action plans, including PD activities, to achieve their three chosen priorities. Next, individual teachers throughout the district create individual development plans with the help of a formal mentor or the principal. Each staff member must show how the individual plan helps achieve his or her school's three priorities.
- One school adopted the same five "areas for improvement" as the district. Then, the school, via a diverse school management committee, set specific and measurable objectives within those five areas. Achievement of the objectives drives school and individual PD decisions.
- One school based its PD on the state's pay-for-performance plan. Each year, the school must outline very specific student learning goals that align with the state's objectives. The school is rewarded by the state in cash, which is distributed to staff for achieving the promised student learning goals. PD for all staff at the school is focused on achieving the goals. (Decisions also are guided by the school's vision, beliefs, and mission.) Individual teachers set personal development goals to help them achieve the pay-for-performance plan goals. At the end of the year, teachers must recount the specific activities they performed to meet their individual PD goals.

Organizers' Checklist

Make Sure the Professional Development Plan Supports the School/District's Long-Term Plan

- ❑ Review existing educational goals for the state, district, and school.
- ❑ "Map" district and school educational goals to ensure that they are linked. (Use Tool 3.)
- ❑ Make a plan for linking team and individual classroom educational (not PD) goals to school goals in the future, including who will ensure linkage, when, and using what tools; and who will review and approve the plan.

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Action Planner Tool 3—
Align Educational Goals

Instructions: Fill in the name(s) of the person(s) completing the tool and the date of the final version. In the left column, list major district educational (student learning, not PD) goals that your school will actively support. In the next column, list your school's educational goals and ensure that they align with the district's goals. As you plan your goals for staff teams and individual staff members, ensure that the goals support at least one goal of the next largest entity (e.g., each team educational goal supports at least one school goal).

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

District Educational Goals	School Educational Goals (Align with district goals)	Team Educational Goals (Align with school goals)	Individual Educational Goals (Align with school/team goals)
Example: *Improve reading in elementary years to levels that prepare all students for successful middle school learning*	*75% of students in third and sixth grade get a score of 4 or above on state test; improve or maintain scores of all students*	*75% in third and sixth grades get scores ≥ 4 on state tests; maintain or improve all students over last year (reading instructional team)*	*Raise scores of the five students in my class who barely missed target last year to 4 this year; maintain or improve others (individual teacher)*

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Make a Clear Plan That Includes a Professional Development Needs Assessment Process

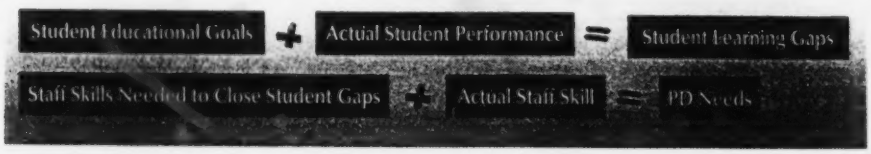
Needs assessment is the process of determining the gaps in student and staff performance and figuring out what staff skills and competencies are necessary to close the performance gaps.

Great needs assessments link student and staff learning needs.

Themes From Award Winners

Determine student and teacher gaps. Needs assessment at its best measures both student and staff learning needs. Focused PD must have two critical inputs: actual student learning versus educational goals, and actual staff skill/competency levels versus the levels needed.

Identifying student learning gaps helps define precisely the level and type of skill that staff members need to help a particular set of students meet learning goals. Likewise, identifying staff gaps helps schools focus PD on areas of teacher skill and competence most needing development to meet student learning needs.



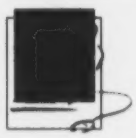
In some cases, needs assessment might reveal a staff strength where the supported educational goal is *not* being met by students. This discrepancy should lead to a discussion of whether the school's policies allow staff members to use their skills (e.g., teachers may understand "experiential learning," but the school must provide the transportation and tools for students to learn outside of the classroom).

Some award winners assessed parent needs as well, seeing parents as critical enablers of student learning. These winners sought to determine what critical skills and knowledge parents needed to help their children learn. They informally (or via survey) assessed how parents stood in these critical areas and used this input to identify parent development opportunities.

In summary, most award winners who expressed satisfaction with their needs assessment process covered both student and teacher (and sometimes parent) needs to determine the focus for professional development.

Make needs assessment the first step in ongoing evaluation and improvement. In many cases, initial needs assessments included a broader range of data sources than was required later, once a specific set of learning goals was chosen. Some award winners found the needs assessment process challenging. While the major steps are clear, they are not always easy to execute. These steps include the following:

1. Choose your comparison groups, i.e., decide whom you want to be measured against. Initially this might include a variety of groups: other public schools (local, state, national); local private schools; or published standards to which you aspire.
2. Determine your sources of data for comparing your school or district to each group (e.g., state or national standardized test scores). Data sources



Use the initial needs assessment process to learn and prepare for using data wisely in the evaluation process later.

available both for the comparison groups and your own students are best, but you may choose some that provide information about your school/district only (e.g., parent survey). Make sure the measurement tools (tests, questionnaires, and so on) meet basic testing quality standards for validity (do they measure what you want?) and reliability (do they measure consistently?).

Data sources used by winners to assess student learning and teacher skill/competence include the following:

Student Learning	Teacher Skill/Competence
✔ standardized tests	✔ supervisor observation
✔ teacher surveys	✔ peer review (observation,portfolio)
✔ portfolios	✔ portfolios
✔ activity logs	✔ activity logs
✔ parent surveys	✔ parent and student surveys
✔ student surveys/self-reporting	✔ teacher surveys/self-reporting
✔ teacher discussions	✔ teacher discussions/focus groups

3. Make sure your *implementation* of tests, questionnaires, and so on, is good. For example, if you survey parents to see what strengths and gaps they perceive in staff, make sure your administration encourages responses from a representative range of parents. Several award winners hired consultants or obtained volunteer assistance from local colleges and universities to ensure that test comparisons and survey administration were executed well.

   Although doing a good needs assessment that unearths the most valuable PD opportunities takes work, the skills and tools your school or district develops during this time may be used later in the ongoing evaluation process. In fact, many award winners turned initial "needs assessments" into the benchmarks for later evaluation and improvement. They typically narrowed the focus to a specific set of student learning standards for ongoing evaluation.

The tools at the end of this section will help you organize the information you gather through various needs assessment data sources to clarify student learning gaps and teacher skill gaps.

Examples From Award Winners

- One suburban district's own curriculum goals provided student learning standards. To assess student learning strengths and gaps, the district used standardized test scores to compare itself to various groups. It also hired a consultant to help compare student performance with local private schools. To assess teacher development opportunities, the

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district looked to the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) and the curriculum goals for standards. It surveyed teachers and administrators for input and evaluated each teacher using peer monitoring and supervisor observation. Based on these inputs, the district organized workshops on topics of common concerns and invited specific teachers who needed development in each workshop topic area.

- One rural elementary school relied upon a thorough needs assessment of the entire district conducted by a local university. Because the outcomes fit their school and the methodology was excellent, the school used the results as a starting point. Later, they recognized that it would be helpful for evaluation purposes to have school-specific measures in their chosen focus curriculum areas as a benchmark. As a result, they implemented benchmarking assessments at the beginning of each year.
- An urban school used local colleges and universities to develop good assessment instruments. They used the assessments as the benchmark for ongoing, frequent evaluation and improvement. They now analyze performance data student-by-student and teacher-by-teacher and make frequent PD decisions based on this analysis. They also conduct regular surveys of parents and teachers.

Organizers' Checklist

Make a Clear Plan That Includes a Professional Development Needs Assessment Process

- ❑ Plan and implement a student needs assessment process. (Use Tool 4.)
- ❑ Identify expert sources to assist with needs assessment, if required.
- ❑ Choose comparison groups.
- ❑ Develop tools as needed to gather data.
- ❑ Gather data.
- ❑ Complete a summary of student needs after student assessments are complete. (Use Tool 4.)
- ❑ Plan a teacher/staff needs assessment process. (Use Tool 5.)
- ❑ Identify expert sources to assist with staff needs assessment, if required.
- ❑ Identify staff skills/competencies needed to close student achievement gaps.
- ❑ Identify the *actual* skill/competency level of staff.
- ❑ Complete a summary of your staff's gaps and strengths after assessments are complete. (Use Tool 5.)

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Action Planner Tool 4—
Needs Assessment: Student Learning Goals Versus Actual Performance

Instructions: Fill in the name(s) of the person(s) completing the tool and the date of the final version. Indicate the level of planning (i.e., district, school, team, or individual). In column one, list major student learning (not PD) goals at this level. In column two, make a note of actual student performance indicators from your needs assessment or evaluation sources. In the third column, indicate whether each student learning area is a gap or strength.

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Organization Level *(check one)*: ❑ District ❑ School ❑ Team ❑ Individual

Student Learning Goals	Actual Student Performance Indicators	Gap or Strength?
Example: *Elementary school: School-level goal was that 75% of students in third and sixth grade get score of 4 or above on state test; improve or maintain scores of all students*	*Mid-year pretest: 70% of third and 78% of sixth graders scored ≥4; same students last year, 45% third and 37% sixth missed targets. Overall, 80% maintained or improved over last year. Of those who declined, 75% (or 15% of overall) were classified as "gifted."*	*Third-grade gap in % meeting target. Schoolwide gap for top-performing students.*

ACTION PLANNER TOOL 5—
NEEDS ASSESSMENT: TEACHER SKILL/COMPETENCE VERSUS ACTUAL PERFORMANCE

Instructions: Fill in the name(s) of the person(s) completing the tool and the date of the final version. Indicate the level of planning (i.e., district, school, team, or individual). In column one, list major student learning gaps (see Tool 4). In column two, indicate the skills/competencies that staff members need most to close each student learning gap. In the third column, indicate how skilled staff members are using data from your needs assessment and follow-up discussions. (Note: Answers for column three may vary for different groups, such as new and veteran teachers.) In the last column, indicate whether each teacher skill/competency is a gap or strength. For staff strengths, put a note on a later meeting agenda to discuss organization barriers that prevent staff from improving student learning results.

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Organization Level *(check one)*: ❑ District ❑ School ❑ Team ❑ Individual

Student Learning Gaps	Staff Skills/ Competencies Needed	Actual Staff Performance	Gap or Strength?
Example: *Schoolwide reading progress gap for top-performing students.*	a. *Techniques for instructing gifted readers* b. *Skills for motivating and influencing gifted students* c. *Techniques for identifying slowed progress early*	a. *According to a survey, teachers use the same content for gifted and average readers* b. *A student survey revealed that 70% of gifted readers were bored with the material; it seems that staff members don't know how to motivate gifted students.* c. *No structure in place for staff to identify student slippage early*	a. *Gap* b. *Gap* c. *Gap*

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Make a Clear Plan That Includes Professional Development Goals

Themes From Award Winners

Set goals to get the results you want. Award winners consistently set goals in advance of making major changes in PD activities and processes. This strategy made selection, evaluation, and improvement of PD activities much simpler since they already had a standard—the goals—to measure against.

Include two kinds of goals. Most award winners had two kinds of goals for professional development. First, they had a set of *principles* that acted as guideposts for the PD design and implementation process. Some called these principles "beliefs"; others called them a "vision" or "mission." Some just called them "goals." And still others used a combination of these terms to describe the general parameters within which PD (and sometimes the whole school) needed to operate. These principles were not necessarily easy to measure or quantitative in nature. Whether PD met them often was the subject of discussion and multiple perspectives. Nonetheless, these principles were critical for guiding the PD design and implementation processes.

All award winners' PD goals of this type included at least the following award criteria (although not always phrased exactly this way). PD efforts will:

- Improve *all* students' learning.
- Improve teacher effectiveness.
- Set high standards for teachers.
- Promote continuous staff learning.
- Enhance staff intellectual and leadership capacity.

While seemingly general, these goals actually changed PD behavior in award-winning schools and districts. For example, for many award winners, focusing on *all* students meant doing a student-by-student analysis. They chose PD activities for specific teachers to help them target the performance of specific students who were lagging, even if only a few students were involved.

Second, award winners also had very specific, *measurable objectives* for student learning and for professional development. If PD activities did not lead to the specified objectives, then they were improved or replaced. Typically, these specific goals were quantifiable, such as student test scores or frequency of certain staff activities.

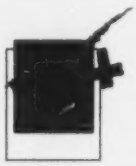
These specific objectives for PD usually are driven by specific student learning goals. In fact, many award winners combined their curriculum and professional development planning teams (at district, school, and/or team levels) to ensure this linkage. Most award winners assumed that the failure of students—even a small set—to meet specified goals meant PD efforts needed improvement.

Underlying the award criteria is an assumption that all students can learn. For award winners, ensuring that staff members have the capability to tap student potential is one major goal of PD, measurable by whether students do, in fact, meet learning goals.

Professional Development Goals

- Improve all students' learning
- Improve teacher effectiveness
- Set high standards for teachers
- Promote continuous staff learning
- Enhance staff intellectual and leadership capacity

Award winners set clear goals based on both lofty principles and nitty-gritty objectives.



Goal setting is the first step toward later evaluation and improvement.

Clearly stated principles can help you keep consistent themes in your professional development, even as specific objectives change over time.

Examples From Award Winner

- In one district, a large population of underperforming special-needs learners prompted the district to seek ways of using technology to address the needs of all students. Integrating technology into all learning became one of four major student education improvement areas. As a result, one of the PD goals for new and veteran teachers was to "integrate technology into teaching and learning." The district required all new staff to pass a technology competency test, and they provided training and on-site assistance to help people acquire the required skills. The school raised funds from the state and private sources to establish the technology program. Technology training sessions were evaluated and staff members were required to submit a form telling how they had used the technology. The district actively used technology not only in the classroom, but also for staff development (e.g., online mentoring, videoconferencing). Since the program was implemented, student test scores have risen.
- In one school, staff content area teams (e.g., math team) wrote standards for both teachers and students, set the curriculum in each area, and conducted evaluations of both student learning and staff development. Inherently, this structure met one of the award criteria by developing staff intellectual and leadership capability: All staff had to make decisions that principals or leadership teams make in many schools.
- In another district, a committee with school representatives first created professional development principles. Then they drafted a tool called "What All Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do" to spell out in precise terms the skills and competencies teachers needed to meet education goals. Individuals were ultimately responsible for ensuring that their development helped them progress in these defined areas.
- In one elementary school, professional development goals flowed directly from the specific grade-level student expectations and curriculum. In addition, enhancing staff leadership capacity was a major principle. Teachers who were "stars" in key areas provided training for others who needed development. Thus, the school saved money and the stars were able to develop their facilitation skills. In addition, stars were invited to a district-level academy to further build their teaching strengths, receiving credits toward master's degrees. They brought their newly enhanced skills back to the school and shared them with others in structured settings.
- In another school, PD goals were clearly identified as part of the pay-for-performance program. These PD goals were linked to specific school performance goals and objectives. PD goals were required to be specific and measurable so that the staff could evaluate whether PD activities were effective. Linking dollars to performance gave this school a reason to ensure that all PD goals were specific and measurable. In addition, the school had a vision, a mission, and beliefs that acted as guideposts for all school activities.
- In yet another school, PD goals cover content expertise, instruction process, and school leadership. These PD goals are based on the school's five major goals and on the needs assessment process. This

school identified specific activities to support each PD goal. Some goals are very specific and quantifiable, others are more "cultural."

- In one district, a joint teacher association and administrator team produced guiding principles ("staff development beliefs") and objectives ("staff development outcomes") for professional development. The objectives were phrased so that the specifics (e.g., numerical targets, content area focus) could easily change from school to school and from year to year.

Organizers' Checklist

Make a Clear Plan That Includes Professional Development Goals

- ❑ Create professional development principles (general goals and parameters). (Use Tool 6.)
- ❑ Create professional development objectives (specific goals). (Use Tools 3, 5, and 7.)

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Action Planner Tool 6—
Clarify Professional Development Principles

Instructions: Fill in the name(s) of the person(s) completing the tool and the date of the final version. Indicate the level of planning (i.e., district, school, or team). In column one, identify sources of principles. In column two, list the school/district principles that act as guideposts for educational activities and student learning. In column three, describe the PD principles that will support each general principle or goal. In column four, note potential measures for each PD principle (i.e., How will you know when you are abiding by each principle?). Note: principles are presumed to be at the organizational or team, not individual, level.

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Level *(check one)*: ❑ District ❑ School ❑ Team

Source	Principle or Goal	Supporting PD Principles	Measures for Principles
Example: *Vision statement*	*All students can learn*	*PD will help staff ensure that all students do learn and improve*	*% students meeting/exceeding minimum standards; % students improving*
Vision, Mission, Beliefs			
General Student Learning Goals (see Tool 3)			
Award Criteria: Professional Development Principles		PD will: a. Improve *all* students' learning. b. Improve teacher effectiveness. c. Set high standards for teachers. d. Promote continuous staff learning. e. Enhance staff intellectual and leadership capacity.	
Other			

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Action Planner Tool 7—
Clarify Specific Professional Development Goals

Instructions: Fill the in name(s) of the person(s) completing the tool and the date of the final version. Indicate the level of planning (i.e., district, school, team, or individual). Using Tool 5, in column one list the skills and competencies staff need to close student learning gaps. In column two, indicate whether this skill is a strength or gap. In column three, state your PD objectives. For example, "All teachers will achieve X skill or Y outcome" to close a staff gap. Or "Teachers will do X activity at Y frequency" to increase implementation of a strength. Finally, in column four identify how you will measure achievement of each goal. Many award winners use direct assessment of teacher skill/competence and student performance.

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Level *(check one)*: ❑ District ❑ School ❑ Team ❑ Individual

Needed Teacher Skills/Competencies (Tool 5)	Gap or Strength (Tool 5)	Supporting Professional Development Goals	Measures for This Goal
Example: *Gifted-reader instruction techniques*	*Gap*	*Staff will learn and use gifted-reader instruction techniques to sustain high achievement levels of gifted readers*	*% top scorers maintain/increase scores; staff knowledge of gifted-reader teaching techniques; frequency and quality of use by staff of gifted-reader teaching techniques*

Make a Clear Plan That Includes Professional Development Content, Process, and Activities

The highest-impact professional development activities were ones that directly and immediately improved staff and management work.

Themes From Award Winners

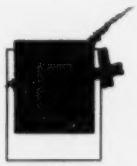
If you have followed the planning tools up to this point, you are capable of defining specific PD content, process, and activities that will help you meet your professional development goals, just as award winners have done. Defining PD goes far beyond deciding what workshops staff will attend. You must decide how you want PD (and staff) to be integrated into other school activities. Then you can design the PD process, and possibly your other school instruction and management activities, around this decision.

Plan professional development content. The "content" of PD is the topic knowledge, skills, or competencies staff members need to meet PD goals. In other words, this is "what staff members need to know." In award-winning organizations, the content of PD at the district, school, and team levels was driven almost exclusively by the PD goals and underlying student education goals. The career goals and interests of individual staff members also affected the content of individual development.

Plan the professional development process. Most award winners used a two-part PD process. Part one, the PD organizing process, is the set of steps staff or others go through to ensure that the right content is addressed and activities are chosen, with all stakeholders involved and informed. Part two is the process used in activities such as workshops, team discussions, observation, and so on. In some cases, the "process" is the "content." One example is when a school's goal is to "integrate PD with daily classroom activity." Teacher teams whose primary mode of staff development is frequent discussion of student performance use this "process" both to learn "integration" and to organize resulting PD activities.

While both parts of the process were seen as important, award winners were more focused on making the PD organizing process a learning event in itself than on making sure that workshops were well taught. Many noted that even workshops with great "process" were limited (although still useful) in their impact. In contrast, embedding PD organizing in daily staff work developed staff leadership and technical knowledge while linking PD more closely to classroom results.

Plan professional development activities. Award winners used numerous kinds of activities, many of which are not new. The critical factor was that award winners selected activities to meet their school or district's specific PD goals. They defined development activities to support both their PD *principles* and their *specific goals* (see Tools 6 and 7). Many award winners also found ways to embed PD learning into ongoing school activities and management. One of the critical themes from award winners is that the very best PD can be quickly applied to daily work in the classroom (or other places that most directly affects students).



Some award winners found frequent evaluation and improvement discussions to be valuable professional development activities.

Using your technology is critical for organizing data for frequent review of student progress.

Example activities from award winners include:

- Team work, including test development, grading, student performance analysis and problem solving, curriculum development, and school management in teams
- Curriculum development (requiring research and planning)
- Action research (forming and testing a hypothesis in the classroom)
- Workshops and conferences
- Individual or small-team research (using mini-sabbaticals or other time)
- Staff study groups
- Mentoring—veterans mentoring new teachers; internal or external (e.g., university) experts mentoring staff
- Observation of others (e.g., "stars" in a skill area; demonstration teaching)
- Peer or supervisor observation, with or without feedback
- Model classrooms for PD innovation testing
- Parent/community learning activities

Award winners typically organize different activities at different organizational levels. For example, award-winning districts often offer workshops on topics needed by many teachers (or other staff or parents). Districts have the clout and funds to get top-grade speakers and facilitators to serve a large number of district staff at one time. Even then, most award winners have very few mandatory development activities taking place at the district level; typically (although not always), district offerings are voluntary. Individual staff members and their supervisors determine which district offerings fit their needs, based on school goals and the skills that individuals need to develop to meet them.

In contrast, award winners typically organize individual research within schools, with both content and specific research activities determined either by work teams or the individual and his or her immediate supervisor (depending on the PD decision process at the school).

Examples From Award Winners

- One district offers minigrants of up to $350 to encourage innovation. The two major criteria are the level of innovation and the potential to improve student learning. For teaching staff, the district favors PD activities that can be used directly in the classroom. The "ideal" minigrants go to teachers who want to try a new classroom project or program that is "innovative, original, and beneficial" to students; grants in this case go directly for materials needed for the new approach. Funding is available only for materials, speakers, and other needs not already available within the schools. The district's PD committee makes monthly decisions about any new minigrant applications and provides feedback to unsuccessful applicants about how to improve their approach to obtain future funding. Examples of funded projects include special field

trips for students (e.g., musical performances, museums) and a program that explored math concepts in literature.

- In one school, ongoing coaching, feedback, and reflection are the primary PD activities, in addition to more traditional summer institutes and inservice days. Teaching staff members have weekly 30-minute meetings with the lead teacher in their content area. They review their individual PD action plans and progress. Quarterly, each teacher presents a report of student progress to the school's leadership team (which includes administrators, lead teachers, and teaching specialists). They also have weekly, voluntary group discussions on various PD topics of interest to multiple staff.
- In another school, coaching and team work—including planning, analysis of student progress, and problem solving—are the primary forms of PD. Students are assessed on a six-week cycle, and teachers decide in teams what staff development is needed to focus on opportunities and gaps seen in student assessments. Extensive formal and informal coaching by peers, the principal, and external experts is critical to this school's success.
- In one district, most professional development occurs during other activities, including curriculum and lesson development, instructional adjustments, analysis of student work, student assessment development, ongoing research and review of instructional methods, reference to standards, and team discussion and presentations. More traditional content skill training to support school and district goals supplements these activities.
- In an award-winning elementary school, standardized achievement scores were at only 33 percent in 1994, driven largely by low literacy scores. Therefore, the school developed two major educational goals: It wanted students to become better (1) readers and (2) writers. The resulting professional development goal was for staff to improve student achievement in reading and writing (along with two other process goals). They researched and found that the New Zealand Model for Balanced Literacy best fit their diverse student population's needs for reading instruction, and that the Six Trait Writing program met their writing needs. PD activities, including formal training and on-the-job implementation, have centered on helping staff understand and use these instructional programs.

Organizers' Checklist

Make a Clear Plan That Includes Professional Development Content, Process, and Activities

- ❑ Plan a process for selecting PD content and activities at each organization level (i.e., district, school, team, and individual staff). (Use Tool 8.)
- ❑ Complete the following tasks for each organization level:
- ❑ Identify the specific PD content required to meet each PD goal. (Use Tool 9.)
- ❑ Identify potential activities to learn PD content. (Use Tool 9.)
- ❑ Research potential activities. (Use Tools 9 and 10.)
- ❑ Select activities at each organizational level. (Use Tools 9 and 10.)

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Action Planner Tool 8—
Professional Development Organizing Process Planner

The purpose of this tool is to help you define how you will make specific PD content and activity decisions to meet PD goals.

Instructions: Fill in the name(s) of the person(s) completing the tool and the date of the final version. For each organization level listed in column one, answer each of the questions. When you are finished, review your answers to make sure that the decisions at all levels make sense together. Do these decisions fit with how you make other decisions in your school or district? If not, consider other changes that may be needed.

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Organization Level	Who identifies potential PD content and activities? How?	Who else has input into content and activities? How?	Who researches activity costs and benefits?	Who makes final decisions about PD activities? How?
Example: *Schoolwide PD activities*	*School leadership team for instruction, leadership, and technology (all academic content chosen at team level)*	*Other staff via annual survey and review at staff meetings*	*Leadership team members (including instruction leaders) accountable for research, but may ask other staff for help*	*Principal, in consultation with leadership team*
District				
School				
Team				
Individual				

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Action Planner Tool 9—
Professional Development Content and Activity Planner

Instructions: Fill in the name(s) of the person(s) completing the tool and the date of the final version. Indicate the organization level and the PD goal you are addressing. (See Tools 6 and 7 for your PD goals.)

On a separate sheet, generate ideas for topics that support the PD goal. Useful sources include skills and competencies from Tool 7; surveys of staff, students, and parents; a group brainstorming session; and research that you conduct. Then, narrow down your topics to focus on one or two that best support this PD goal for the next 12 months.

For each topic, brainstorm and research potential activities. For each activity, you need a description that includes activity content and process (column one); staff time required and deadlines (column two); resources needed (column three); and the expected impact on the PD goal (column four). Use the information you gather to help you decide which activities will best help you meet this goal with the available resources.

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Level *(check one)*: ❑ District ❑ School ❑ Team

PD Goal: _____

Topic	Potential Activity (content and process)	Time: a. Deadlines b. Staff time	Required Resources (funding, expertise, facilities)	Impact on Goal (high, medium, or low)
Example: *Reading for gifted students*	*Training for reading team to implement individualized reading program for gifted students, using ABC Program. Monthly review of gifted students using ABC method.*	*a. Initial training 3 hours (January)* *b. Initial 3 hours; 30 minutes/ month*	*Materials for training, $400; Can train and do ongoing work in weekly team block time, so no substitutes needed; no special expertise or facilities needed*	*Expect will maintain "steep," individualized learning curve for gifted readers; help catch problems early; high impact, low cost*

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Make a Clear Plan That Includes Research That Supports the Chosen Content/Process for Professional Development

Award winners built their innovations on top of the successful experiences of others.

Themes From Award Winners

Award winners conducted research to ensure that their approach to PD was supported by the experiences of other successful schools and districts. (See Appendix D for a literature review supporting the award criteria and Appendix B for other resources that may be helpful.) They used research results to design professional development and to support grant-writing efforts. Their methods varied, depending on available staff time and on the specific focus of professional development. The common themes included the following:

Assign responsibility for research. Winners were methodical about assigning responsibility for conducting research. They did research to learn how to gather information about how to use a particular approach successfully and to evaluate its likely success. The side benefit was that winners created "experts" within their school who knew the ins and outs of new approaches.

Build on the work of others. Winners used existing sources of information rather than do all research from scratch. Winning schools looked to district PD staff for prior research. They also used national groups such as the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) and Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Plan to use action research. Some winners saw themselves as the best source of ongoing research, and they used "action research" methods to test the effectiveness of PD within their own schools.

Use the Internet to visit key professional development Web sites for current information on best practices. See Appendix B for suggested sites.

Action research is using the real results in your own school or district to draw conclusions about what approaches to staff and student learning work for you (and why). Action research applies formal "laboratory" steps, but uses "real world" data that you collect in your own school(s).

Examples From Award Winners

- One district assigned PD staff members to conduct ongoing, comprehensive research. It summarizes results and disseminates them to schools regularly.
- One school looked first to NSDC standards and to the research already available to support them. It conducted independent research into PD best practices, as well. The school researched content issues and different ways to organize the PD decision-making process. To get the work done, PD committee members took responsibility for specific research topics. These people keep up with current findings in their topic areas and make ongoing recommendations about new activities to support PD goals.
- Another school obtained initial "best practice" research from a local university involved in school improvement. Later, they conducted action research to test how well best practices worked when applied at the school. The school learned from its internal research that implementation was as important as design; and it made subsequent changes in how to help teachers learn to improve students' problem-solving skills.

Organizers' Checklist

Make a Clear Plan That Includes Research That Supports the Chosen Content/Process for Professional Development

- ❑ Include research into best practices in the initial PD design. (Use Tools 9 and 10.)

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Action Planner Tool 10—
Research Summary

Instructions: Indicate the research topic, researcher's name, and the date below. See Tool 8 for decisions you may already have made about how you will choose people to conduct research on specific activities. Consider sources of existing research, e.g., district-level PD staff, national organizations such as the National Staff Development Council, and local university professors specializing in staff development or school improvement. Use the table below to record your answers to each question.

Topic or Question: _____ Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Research Questions	Notes
Where else has this PD approach been tried?	
How are these schools/districts similar or dissimilar to ours?	
What are the benefits of this PD approach?	
What are the weaknesses of this PD approach?	
How costly is this approach in money and staff time?	
What are other reasons this approach might (or might not) work in our school/district?	
What are some alternatives to this approach that we might research further?	

Make a Clear Plan That Includes Resources Available to Support Professional Development

Award winners rigorously set priorities to focus resources for maximum impact.

Themes From Award Winners

Award winners used three essential resources to support their PD efforts: money, expertise, and facilities. Obtaining and using each of these resources well was critical to their success.

Get and use money well. Award winners generally cited three critical elements for funding PD: focusing on high-impact priorities, spending wisely, and tapping a variety of funding sources. These elements are described below.

1. Award winners focused resources on the highest-impact priorities. Many (but not all) award winners said that how they allocated dollars was almost as critical as how much they had available. These winners were methodical about prioritizing funds, no matter what the source, to focus on high-impact efforts. They focused more of the school's overall budget on professional development and ensured that money went to the highest-priority PD activities first. Winners vary in how they made decisions about PD priorities. In some organizations, this decision was made at the district or school level. In others, instructional teams with their own budgets made PD spending decisions. Most award winners made PD spending decisions on a combination of levels, typically district, school, and team.
2. Award winners were good at spending money wisely. For example, more than one winner collaborated with other schools in the district (or other districts in the state) to provide large-group training with high-quality speakers. Most used some version of a train-the-trainer method, sending staff "stars" in a content area to national conferences and having them share lessons with other staff upon return.
3. Award winners were very good at raising money. They found a variety of funding sources in addition to regular allocations: corporate foundations and direct corporate funding; private foundations (local, state, and national); federal grants (both PD-focused and general funds for special student populations); and budget line items related to PD (e.g., funds allocated for staff planning time). Many said that aggressive grant writing is essential; it forces you to make a good plan and it adds money to your PD budget. Grant-writing resources include district-level staff, teachers (typically on paid release time), and university staff for joint grant applications. Winners used their earlier research to demonstrate the strength of their PD approaches and to increase chances of obtaining support. Forming a research partnership with a local university or community college to try innovative approaches to PD was a common approach.

Obtain expertise. In addition to direct funding, award winners sought volunteer or inexpensive expertise. Sources included their own staff, district-level experts, parents, university faculty, community college faculty, and union staff. Many of these sources also had a mission to train and educate; thus, partnerships helped everyone meet their goals.

Some of the best sources of funds are your current funders. Make sure they know what impact their funds are having in your school(s).

Using local experts from universities or other sources was a common way for award winners to improve data gathering for evaluation.

Obtain facilities. Finally, physical space was an asset that some winners sought either to boost PD directly or to save money in other budget areas. Sources included community colleges and universities (for large-group, off-site PD), local corporate training and retreat facilities, and local community agency space.

Examples From Award Winners

- One urban school uses local resources extensively to support PD directly and free up funding. It uses local university professors to mentor and train teaching staff as well as to help design evaluation instruments. The school uses local YMCA space (for physical education) and museums (for art) to free up funds that could be focused on PD. Budgeting is critical. All funds from all sources go into the same large pool, which they draw from according to the school's overall priorities. Since many PD activities are very high priority, they are well funded.
- A very isolated rural school uses external partnerships with organizations around the country to support its PD efforts. These partners provide funding and special training opportunities for staff. In addition, this award winner draws on the resources of six local community colleges and universities. The school also obtains grants from foundations for specific purposes. It uses a train-the-trainer approach extensively to spread the benefit of training while keeping costs down. It keeps a "wish list" of specific needs (PD and other), even ones that are not top priority, so that when special-purpose funds become available via grants or through the district, it can quickly take advantage of the opportunity.
- One award-winning district provides internal staff development consultants at the district level who are available to work with schools and even individual teachers. The district also makes competitive grants available to teachers for individual research. It boosted its own funds by applying for private foundation grants.

Organizers' Checklist

Make a Clear Plan That Includes Professional Development Evaluation Steps

- ❑ Identify success measures for each PD goal and each supporting activity. (Use Tool 12.)
- ❑ Identify data sources and a gathering method for each measure. (Use Tool 12.)
- ❑ Plan a process for reporting evaluation findings. (Use Tool 12.)
- ❑ Determine who will lead the process for making PD. (Use Tool 12.)

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Action Planner Tool 11—
Financial Resource Planning

Instructions: Use budgeting spreadsheets available to you to assist with planning. In Table A, identify both existing funds and high-potential additional funds for the next year for all purposes (not just PD). Add up the total expected funds available.

In Table B, identify mandatory expenditures for legal purposes or basic organizational effectiveness. Then, in priority order, list discretionary expenses. Include PD activities where they fit in the overall priority order of expenditures for the district or school. Be sure to consider both direct costs and indirect costs, such as replacement staff or overtime. Keep a running total (sum of all costs to that point in list) so you can see how far down your priority list expected funds will take you. Where in your priority list do the funds run out? Do you need to rethink your priority order?

Your actual list probably will be much longer than indicated here. Use these tables as a guide to focus and prioritize your resource allocation.

Table A: Sources of Funds

Source	Amount
Existing Funds in Budget	$
Potential Additional Sources	
1.	$
2.	$
3.	$
Total Funds (sum of above)	$

Table B: Uses of Funds

Priority Uses of Funds	Direct Costs	Addt'l Staff Cost*	Running Total
Nondiscretionary Expenses	$	$	$
Discretionary Priorities			
1.	$	$	$
2.	$	$	$
3.	$	$	$
4.	$	$	$
5.	$	$	$

**For staff overtime or substitute time not included in nondiscretionary expenses.*

Make a Clear Plan That Includes Professional Development Evaluation Steps

Themes From Award Winners

Most award winners found that the evaluation steps looked somewhat like the initial needs assessment, although they were more focused on chosen PD goals and activities. Their lessons include the following:

Measure how well activities help meet professional development goals. Evaluation typically combined simple tools to evaluate specific activities, more extensive analysis of teacher effectiveness and student learning progress, and a process for making PD improvements based on evaluation results.

Most winners evaluated specific activities with short evaluation forms (typically one page) that assessed the quality of both the process and the content. The process questions addressed the quality of speakers and materials. The content questions addressed how well the activity taught specific knowledge and how well the content helped participants meet PD goals.

More extensive analysis included looking at student progress—student-by-student, teacher-by-teacher, grade-by-grade—and making simple comparisons within the school (or district) as well as to external comparison groups (e.g., state averages). Also included in the "extensive" category were more qualitative means of assessing staff progress in target skills/competencies via many of the same methods as the initial needs assessment.

Frequent evaluation and improvement is best. The process for making improvements varied widely among award winners and typically depended on how the school or district was managed generally. Staff involvement in PD *improvement* tended to be similar to staff involvement in PD *planning*. In some schools/districts, a working team analyzed results and presented them to a leadership team with recommendations. This activity often occurred on an annual basis. In other schools/districts, staff teams made regular changes in PD based on feedback. Schools doing both frequent and annual evaluation/improvement reported that the frequent feedback was the most helpful for ensuring that PD resulted in immediate improvement in student performance.

Examples From Award Winners

- One school combines several evaluation elements: frequent peer and self-evaluation in the school's staff instructional teams using teacher portfolios and student outcomes; periodic student evaluations of teachers; and annual review of student achievement versus goals.
- Another school uses this combination: evaluations immediately following workshops; team-level assessment of whether staff members are using training ideas and materials in the classroom with success; teacher portfolios showing teacher progress against individual development goals; and a broad, annual "needs assessment" survey.

Evaluation means figuring whether you are meeting your goals, why or why not, and what you should do next to improve.

Award winners' evaluation plans addressed not just data gathering, but the PD improvement process as well.

What works this year might not address next year's needs. Frequent evaluation and improvement will help keep your staff and students moving forward.

Frequent evaluation requires using technology to make sense of data quickly and effectively.

- Still another school uses "action research" to test PD efforts, forming and testing their hypotheses about what would improve teacher and student performance. They also use simple feedback forms to evaluate specific activities, and they conduct a broad annual survey.

Organizers' Checklist

Make a Clear Plan That Includes Professional Development Evaluation Steps

- ❑ Identify success measures for each PD goal and each supporting activity. (Use Tool 12.)
- ❑ Identify data sources and a gathering method for each measure. (Use Tool 12.)
- ❑ Plan a process for reporting evaluation findings. (Use Tool 12.)
- ❑ Determine who will lead the process for making PD. (Use Tool 12.)

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Action Planner Tool 12—
Evaluation Planner

Instructions: Fill in the name(s) of the person(s) completing the tool and the date of the final version. Indicate the organization level. In column one, list the PD goals you are evaluating. In column two, list the activities associated with each PD goal. In column three, indicate the measures of success for each activity (see the needs assessment section and Tool 7). Consider results (does activity help you meet PD goals) and process (speaker quality, etc). In column four, describe how you will gather data for these measures. Include both the sources of data and the method (e.g., students via questionnaire). In columns five through seven, indicate who will gather and report data (as well as who might provide assistance), when it will be gathered, and who will ensure that results are used to improve PD.

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Level *(check one)*: ❑ District ❑ School ❑ Team

PD Goal	Activities	Measures of Success	Data Sources and Gathering Method	Who Will Gather and Report?	When?	Who Will Lead Improvement Planning?
Example: *Staff will learn and use gifted-reader instruction techniques to sustain high achievement levels of gifted readers*	*ABC gifted program for reading instructional team*	*% top scorers maintain/increase scores; staff knowledge; frequency, quality of staff use of ABC*	*Test score statistics; peer observation, team leader observation, team report to principal*	*Team leader; principal*	*Test scores mid- and end of year; observation, team report October, February*	*Team leader; may ask principal for facilitation assistance*

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Share the Plan With the School Community

Award winners started off on the right foot by sharing their plans for professional development change with the school community.

Themes From Award Winners

Do more than communicate facts. Award winners found a variety of ways to keep the school community informed about professional development, starting with the planning stage. In fact, most award winners sought to get the school community excited about PD to encourage active support for PD and related school improvement efforts.

At a bare minimum, award winners kept parents, staff (many of whom were already involved in PD organizing), students, and other community members informed about PD basics, along with other high-priority school news. They used a variety of communication media, depending upon their resources (see examples below). In addition to sharing the plan for PD improvements, award winners found it motivating to focus on student learning results once PD had been implemented.

Media for sharing PD news with school community:

- School newsletters
- PTA meetings and newsletters
- Open presentations
- Postings on school bulletin boards
- School handbooks
- Special celebration events throughout year
- Letters and memos to parents
- Parent conferences
- End-of-year events to celebrate yearlong efforts
- E-mail updates
- District calendars
- Local radio programs
- Web pages

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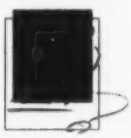
Professional development is easier to continue over the long haul if you have a broad base of support for your efforts.



Use technology to keep parents informed and to encourage more parents to learn the technology that will be essential in their children's lives.

Help parents understand professional development. Many award winners wanted to give parents and community members a taste of PD. In addition to involving parents and others directly on the PD organizing team, award winners:

- Invited parents to attend staff development events.
- Provided special parent development sessions that mimic group staff development activities.
- Involved parents in academic extracurricular activities, to learn or to share expertise.
- Got input into PD planning from parent advisory committees.

Examples From Award Winners

- One award winner goes to great lengths to inform parents about and include them in a variety of ways in PD and other school activities. It holds family nights to focus on curriculum topics and works hard to get 100 percent attendance. Parents are heavily involved in extracurricular activities, including academic clubs. The school newsletter and letters to parents keep them informed about the school's mission, PD efforts, results, and activities. In addition, the school holds special events to celebrate student results and other successes. School information is shared in person at parent conferences.
- In an award-winning district, parents are invited to attend some group staff development activities. In addition, the district uses a combination of media to inform parents about PD: periodic reports, open forums, press releases, presentations, campus newsletters, posting the mission statement, campus handbooks, campus-level celebrations, and others.

Organizers' Checklist

Share the Plan With the School Community

- ❑ Make a plan for ongoing communications, including information about the initial PD plan, with school community. (Use Tools 1 and 13.)

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Action Planner Tool 13—
Keeping the School Community Informed About Professional Development

Instructions: Fill in the name(s) of the person(s) completing the tool and the date of the final version. In column one, list the stakeholders from Tool 1 that you want to keep informed about PD. Answer the questions at the top of each column for each stakeholder. Tailor your answers to make the desired impact on each stakeholder. Remember, you may want send different messages using different kinds of media. Also, consider the special needs of each stakeholder (e.g., parents who read and speak in languages other than English).

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Stakeholder	What do we want to communicate?	How often?	What media will we use?	Who is accountable?
Example: *Parents*	*PD change process, new PD design with role for parents, student results*	*Monthly at minimum*	*PTA meetings; school newsletter; end-of-year celebration*	*Parent/staff communication team, with guidance from principal*

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Step Two:
Implementing Professional Development

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Implementing Professional Development

Implementation worked best when winners stuck to their plans and kept improving them.

Overview

The award-winning steps for successful professional development implementation are:

1. Stay abreast of and incorporate best practices into teaching, learning, and leadership.
2. Make sure school/district policies and practices support actual PD implementation for staff in schools.
3. Ensure that resources remain available to organize and implement PD.
4. Make PD part of everyday life at school.

Stay Abreast of and Incorporate Best Practices into Teaching, Learning, and Leadership

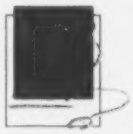
Themes From Award Winners

Award winners not only conducted initial research, they also found ways to stay abreast of best practices and to continue trying new ideas to meet school goals. These strategies include the following:

Assign clear responsibility. Consistent with initial research, award winners were very clear about assigning accountability for ongoing research. Some award winners divided ongoing research responsibilities among PD committee members (e.g., teachers, other staff, parents, and so on) into areas narrow enough not to be overwhelming. Many counted on district-level PD staff to help with research.

Use a variety of information sources. The sources of new information were varied. Some used "action research" to formally test new ideas in their own schools and to make improvements based on findings. At either the school or district level, most award winners ensured that someone maintained contact with national organizations (e.g., National Staff Development Council, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) for quick access to new ideas. Others used local university resources to stay fresh. Whatever the source, winners were most satisfied with their ongoing research when they had an established, systematic way of gathering information.

Create a forum for using research findings. Award winners found that they needed a forum for reporting back and using new ideas. This forum varied,



Use the Internet to visit key professional development Web sites for current information on best practices. See Appendix B for suggested sites.

depending on how ongoing PD was organized. Typically, new ideas were shared either through formal or informal presentations to the group(s) making ongoing PD decisions at the district or school level.

Examples From Award Winners

- One award-winning school has a staff member who meets regularly with a professor from a local university to get fresh ideas and hear about new best practices in PD.
- One district has staff members who are very active in national organizations. They count on these staff members to keep new ideas flowing into the district.
- One principal of an award-winning school asks teachers who are skeptical about specific new ideas to conduct further research. When they come back with positive feelings about the new idea, it is much easier to get other staff to buy in. They use this process on an ongoing basis to keep a high standard for new activities.

Make Sure School/District Policies and Practices Support Actual Professional Development Implementation for Staff in Schools

Address staff time and other policies in the planning stage to reduce frustrating barriers when you are implementing professional development.

Themes From Award Winners

Besides providing funding and access to expert resources, the most significant policy issue award winners cited was allocation of staff time. Finding the quantity of paid, frequent staff time needed to fully incorporate PD into daily school life was a challenge for all award winners. They addressed this challenge in various ways, depending upon the nature of their current policies and reasons for them.

Barrier: Not enough staff time for professional development in the regular workweek

Some solutions used by the award winners include the following:

- Expand regular workweek hours (e.g., from 37.5 to 40) and use the extra time for PD. This solution requires funding for additional staff time.
- Allocate current class planning time to PD by changing how teachers plan. Make class planning a teacher learning activity in itself by moving to team planning, grading, and problem solving.
- Develop an outstanding, regular substitute list and provide the administrative help for teachers to schedule this assistance easily. This solution requires funding for substitute time.
- Keep substitutes as districts employees to improve the quality and availability of substitutes to schools.
- Use student teachers, interns, and parent volunteers to cover classrooms for short PD activities.
- Use staff meetings already on the school schedule for PD instead.
- Allow teachers to cover for each other for short periods of time.
- Use specialists and other school staff in the classroom so that regular teachers may focus on PD.
- Change class scheduling to include a short PD period every day.
- Incorporate PD into other daily activities. Encourage staff to reflect daily on what they have learned and to look for ways to "do it better next time."

Barrier: Not enough blocks of time for longer professional development events

Some solutions used by the award winners include the following:

- Schedule special PD activities on weekends. Make this practice more attractive by arranging group babysitting for staff children, offering

credit toward degrees, making it voluntary but with very enticing topics, or providing food.

- Create a half-day in students' weekly schedules and use the remaining half-day for PD.
- Arrange PD after school hours on weekday afternoons on a regular schedule (e.g., 3–5 p.m. on Thursdays).
- Fit as much block PD into the summer as possible, but beware that training without immediate implementation can go stale.
- Use district contacts to organize joint PD training with other schools. Use saved funds to pay for additional staff time or substitute time for PD.
- Accumulate unused staff time from regular workweeks into special PD focus times (e.g., monthly). This solution requires clarity about expected time during the regular workweek.
- Offer course credit toward graduate degrees (in partnership with a college or university) or toward relicensure to encourage participation in weekend or after-hour activities.
- Ask staff to voluntarily lengthen the school day by a short time (one school did 10 minutes per day); consolidate the "excess" time for activities requiring large time blocks (the same school got four days per year out of the 10 extra minutes per day).

Barrier: Too much low-impact, required professional development

One possible solution: Negotiate use of paid district or state-required PD time (inservice days) to focus on your school's highest priority PD efforts. Use this time in blocks or spread it throughout the year.

Examples From Award Winners

- In one district, it is common practice for teachers to use lunch periods for PD and planning. District PD specialists come during that time to provide expertise. The district also sponsors voluntary learning clubs on specific topic areas; these typically meet twice per month after school. In addition, teachers work in teams for teaching and planning. They typically meet daily for at least a brief time to discuss progress and solve problems together.
- In one school, staff members use grant funds to provide release time for PD every tenth day for one staff member. The school also has contracted out topics such as art and music; they block schedule this time so that teaching staff members have a weekly block of time to focus on PD. They make heavy use of interns and assistants for providing smaller chunks of time for PD.
- Another school is organized into instructional teams that do all planning and classroom delivery. This structure creates constant interaction among teachers, which encourages daily improvement and learning. The school uses block scheduling to create team work time, and individual teachers relieve each other for individual PD time.

- A district requires all new staff to sign an agreement that they will participate in extra training beyond their contract hours. This time is in addition to 11 days set aside for district-funded professional development each year.
- An award-winning high school allows staff to use local district staff development funds to attend courses (including those toward an advanced degree) at local colleges and universities. Staff members benefit from their "volunteer" time by obtaining degrees, certifications, and new skills. The school benefits from the training staff receive; it doesn't have to use valuable time to organize special workshops.

Ensure That Resources Remain Available to Organize and Implement Professional Development

Themes From Award Winners

Dwindling funds, volunteer time, and other resources are common problems after an initial burst of energy for any nonprofit organization. Schools are no exception. Award winners have found a few key tactics to deal with the problem.

Show results. Both for maintaining current support and obtaining new resources, it is critical to show that your professional development improves student learning. Award winners repeatedly emphasized how important it is to share results with funders, teachers, students, parents, volunteers, and community supporters.

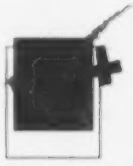
Reprioritize continuously. Make your financial and other resource planning a "living" process. Periodically review how your school is investing time and money in PD and make sure that you are still hitting your highest priorities first to make the most of the resources you have.

Leverage your professional development. Try to find ways to make the biggest PD (and student learning) impact from the resources you have. You will already have thought this through to design your PD, but your school or district will need to get continuously better at using what you have. For example, use teachers trained in a particular area last year to train new staff rather than paying for new teacher training by outsiders. Find more ways to integrate classroom planning and teaching with PD and to get staff working in teams. This strategy creates a natural "lab" for teachers to push each other toward excellence and to learn from each other. You'll find this is one of the highest-impact, lowest-cost PD investments you can make.

Examples From Award Winners

- One award-winning school found that funds for keeping PD fresh were dwindling. It found various ways to get fresh ideas without much expense. The school makes temporary staff trades with another school so that teachers are exposed to new ideas. It also shares training with others schools. And it changed how it teaches some subject areas, such as using field trips instead of employees for fine arts. Also, teachers train other teachers in a variety of areas, based either on existing expertise or recent external training.
- One district found that the more it shows outstanding student academic results from PD efforts, the easier it was to keep resources flowing its way. Even in tight budget years, it is politically and practically hard to cut PD funds when PD is clearly improving student learning. This district specifically tracks the impact of increased PD spending on student results. It publicizes results heavily in the community to build support.

Improving the flow and use of funds for professional development will be one critical factor in how long you sustain excellence.



Evaluation results are important for improving and "selling" your professional development efforts.

Continue to seek ways for technology to improve the efficiency of professional development.

Make Professional Development Part of Everyday Life at School

The more professional development is embedded in core school activities, the easier it will be to sustain changes.

Themes From Award Winners

Most award winners took one or more of the following three critical paths toward making PD part of everyday life at school. The goal in most award-winning organizations was to keep staff members' minds on professional development so they could seize immediately on opportunities for improvement.

Set aside time daily or weekly to focus exclusively on professional development. Some award winners carved time out of the regular school day, every day or most days, for planning time that could be used for PD. Most winners at least carved out weekly time for staff to focus individually or in teams on PD.

Integrate professional development into other activities. Some winners made classroom planning and teaching a PD event in itself by moving to team planning, teaching, and student evaluation. These organizations consider the exchange of ideas among teachers and the opportunity for staff to "push" each other toward excellence as a PD effort that has a high impact on student results. Asking staff to team teach was not enough, though; winners made sure that the teams had time as a group to plan, work, evaluate, and improve.

In addition, many winners included staff on school or district planning and management teams to develop staff leadership and to help ensure that schoolwide decisions had the intended classroom impact. This activity also was seen as a PD effort that was integrated into the regular work of the school or district.

Create cultural change. In most cases, school or district leadership created cultural change, making PD discussions among staff an expected part of the day, informally as well as formally. The cultural changes were typically emphasized by symbols such as a short, clear, ever-present mission statement and big annual events to celebrate. The culture change was reinforced by key management (e.g., principal, superintendent) behaviors such as encouraging debate and discussion among staff and rewarding staff (often with even more PD opportunities) who contributed to PD efforts.

Whether they used the popular term "learning community," the award winners stretched themselves to include all staff and other critical members of the school community in the quest for improving student learning. In most cases, all staff members were included in PD (although the learning goals and activities differed according to the staff role). Many winners included parents in PD opportunities or established special parent/family learning events.

Examples From Award Winners

- In one award-winning high school, teachers are divided into six cross-grade, interdisciplinary instructional teams. Each team plans and executes its own PD with its own PD budget. Professional improvement is expected to be a daily event and school leadership is vocal about this expectation. There is a great deal of informal as well as structured time

for discussing challenges and brainstorming ways to address student needs. Parents also are offered courses that the school sees as critical to supporting learning efforts for this student population.

- At another school, continuous innovation itself is seen as critical for staff so that they will understand the challenge that students face in learning new things and trying new ideas. Although PD change efforts were led by teachers here, a series of supportive principals have been vocal supporters of staff efforts to improve PD. It was critical to cultural change when one principal stopped emphasizing that PD was "voluntary" and instead began saying that it was "expected of all staff."
- Yet another school included "being a learning community" in its mission statement. It has found many ways to integrate learning into daily life. For example, staff members are part of school improvement teams that identify issues, conduct research, and recommend initiatives, including PD changes. Each team elects a chair; this strategy develops leadership within the school. The school also extends its philosophy to parents. It includes parents on the school improvement teams, has a parent center on campus, and provides night courses for parents (e.g., in technology). Parents with special skills act as teachers to other parents.

Organizers' Checklist

Implement a Professional Development Process

- ❑ Stay abreast of and incorporate best practices into teaching, learning, and leadership. (Use Tools 14 and 10.)
- ❑ Make sure school/district policies and practices support actual PD implementation for staff in schools. (Use Tool 14.)
- ❑ Identify critical factors for implementation success in your school/district.
- ❑ Identify an ongoing process for ensuring successful implementation and problem solving.
- ❑ Ensure that resources remain available to organize and implement PD. (Use Tool 14.)
- ❑ Identify opportunities to make PD part of everyday school life; revisit periodically to improve. (Use Tool 14.)

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Action Planner Tool 14—
Implementation Planner

Instructions: Fill in the name(s) of the person(s) completing the tool and the date. Read the award-winning Implementation Success Actions below and Critical Steps for each. Use Tool 2, Action Accountability Planner, to make action plans where indicated. Add other implementation success actions you identify, and use Tool 2 to make an action plan for each. Revisit these implementation actions periodically to assess need for changes.

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Implementation Success Actions	Critical Steps
Stay abreast of and incorporate best practices into teaching, learning, and leadership.	• Identify specific, manageable topic areas for ongoing research. • Make an action plan for conducting ongoing research in each area. • Make an action plan for reporting back and incorporating new ideas.
Ensure school/district policies and practices support actual PD implementation for staff in schools.	• Identify current and potential policy barriers to implementing the PD plan. • Identify potential solutions to barriers. • Make an action plan to research and narrow solutions. • Make an action plan for desired changes. • Include new barrier identification and problem solving as a regular agenda item.
Ensure that resources remain available to organize and implement PD.	• Make a list of all current sources of funds, expertise, facilities. • Make an action plan for meeting the goals and needs of current resources (funders, volunteers, etc.) to increase the chance of future assistance. • Identify potential new sources of funds, expertise, facilities. • Make an action plan for researching and obtaining assistance from new sources.
Make PD part of everyday life at school.	• Identify opportunities to make PD part of everyday life, including regular time for PD, integrating PD into teaching and school management, and developing visible cultural symbols of support for PD. • Identify barriers to making PD part of everyday life. • Identify solutions to barriers. • Create an action plan for making changes to incorporate PD into everyday life.
Other implementation success actions for your school or district	

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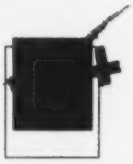
Step Three:

Evaluating and Improving Professional Development

Evaluating and Improving Professional Development



The best evaluations are "living" parts of the professional development improvement process, actively helping winners come closer to meeting professional development goals.

Overview

The award-winning steps for successful professional development evaluation and improvement can be summarized as follows:

1. Use PD design goals to determine evaluation measures and standards for success.
2. Clarify who is accountable for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data and for facilitating "PD next steps" decisions.
3. Use evaluation findings to make improvements in PD.
4. Ensure that evaluation criteria include at least:
   a. Improvement in teaching.
   b. Improvement in student learning.
   c. Narrowing of student achievement gaps.

Use Professional Development Design Goals to Determine Evaluation Measures and Standards for Success

Theme From Award Winners

Stick to the plan. The message here from award winners is simple: Make a plan and stick to it. Award winners were generally meticulous about getting down to brass tacks with PD goals and measures during the planning process. They were equally meticulous about using the plan to evaluate specific PD events and the overall PD effort.

Examples From Award Winners

- In one school, the PD coordinating committee, instruction teams, and the personnel committee each monitor alignment between the original PD goals and actual staff and student outcomes. They ensure throughout the year that they are measuring what they intended and that outcomes are hitting goals.
- Another school uses curriculum standards and individual development plan goals as the litmus tests for PD efforts at the school and individual levels. These are the ultimate measures against which the PD program is assessed.

Clarify Who Is Accountable for Collecting, Analyzing, and Reporting Data and for Facilitating "PD Next Steps" Decisions

Clarify how you will use evaluation to improve professional development.

Theme From Award Winners

Consolidate professional development planning and evaluation. Award winners typically put responsibility for evaluating PD in the hands of the people responsible for organizing PD. This responsibility varied tremendously depending on the school (or district) and on the level of evaluation (individual, team, school, and district).

In many award-winning schools, a formal committee of staff, administrators, and parents was responsible for pulling together all of the data and coming to conclusions about the effectiveness of PD. In others, a small, informal team conducted this process for the whole school. In still others, a significant portion of the PD evaluation and improvement took place at the instructional team level where incremental evaluation and improvement could be made.

Example From Award Winners

- In an award-winning district, campus-based teams and a district-level PD committee jointly analyze evaluation data, develop PD goals, plan professional development activities, and evaluate current programs (beginning the cycle again). When they noticed that special education and gifted students were not performing at the desired levels, they developed educational and PD goals in target areas. They also refocused their data analysis to track improvement in student achievement in target areas.

Use Evaluation Findings to Make Improvements in Professional Development

Themes From Award Winners

Most award winners took one of two overall approaches to this most critical part of evaluation, and some used both approaches.

Make small changes frequently. Some winners took an incremental approach to evaluation, taking frequent measures of progress against goals and making incremental changes in PD in response to data. The value winners saw in this approach was that it kept staff focused on results throughout the year, and it refocused PD time and money to directly and immediately impact student learning results. This approach worked particularly well where PD planning and organizing were integrated into staff team planning and teaching.

Make big changes annually. Other winners took measures on an annual basis, analyzed results over this longer period, and made "big" changes in PD on this annual schedule. The value of this approach was that they could draw clear, research-based conclusions about student performance over the longer period; they could more easily publicize results to the broader community (e.g., via "annual reports"); and it was easier to make radical changes in PD. This approach worked well where a central body or team was the primary organizer of PD.

Examples From Award Winners

- In one award-winning elementary school, student performance is already very high, so it is necessary to seek small, incremental improvements. Student achievement progress data are posted in the school hallways throughout the year for all staff, students, parents, and visitors to see. The school also monitors achievement results student-by-student and teacher-by-teacher throughout the year and makes PD decisions accordingly. For instance, if a teacher has five students underperforming in the same area, the principal and teacher try to figure out why. They might focus the teacher's PD on resolving the specific student performance problem.
- In one school district, all programs, including PD efforts, are thoroughly evaluated every three years and stopped if they are not working. Meanwhile, they make smaller-scale changes by using 26 schools in the district as models. The specific materials and PD processes used in these schools are evaluated, improved, and disseminated on a much more frequent basis.
- In one school, staff used the first-year evaluations to make changes in the evaluation process itself. They found that it was hard to draw clear conclusions about the effectiveness of PD without looking at beginning-of-year and end-of-year data. When they moved to this "action research" approach, they were able to make big changes in their PD approach annually. As a result, big changes were made in student learning.

Ensure That Evaluation Criteria Include at Least: (a) Improvement in Teaching, (b) Improvement in Student Learning, and (c) Narrowing of Student Achievement Gaps

Technology can play a critical role in sorting and simplifying evaluation data.

Themes From Award Winners

Focus on important goals. The message from award winners was simple: The PD goals should include improving teaching, improving student learning, and narrowing student achievement gaps. The evaluation process should include measuring how well PD meets these goals. Award winners didn't just evaluate PD workshops and the like, they looked at whether the overall education goals were being met. They assumed that the quality of professional development drove the successes and failures not just of teachers, but of students, too.

Use your data. In addition, award winners consistently tracked student achievement for subgroups within the schools and districts to ensure that all students were benefiting from PD efforts and that achievement gaps were narrowing. If consistent patterns for subgroups appeared, then PD efforts focused on the needs of these students and their teachers.

Example From Award Winners

- One district measures student achievement results teacher-by-teacher and student-by-student using standardized tests. It produces extensive analysis, displayed in tables and charts, to show trends and the impact on subgroups. The district also asks staff members for their subjective assessment of how it affects student learning, using informal observation of students. New PD activities address any problematic patterns.

Organizers' Checklist

Evaluation and Implementation

- ❑ Ensure implementation of the evaluation plan. (Use Tool 12.)
- ❑ Schedule time to review and improve the evaluation process after the first round of evaluation/improvement.

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Step Four:

Sharing Professional Development Learning

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Sharing Professional Development Learning

Documenting professional development changes clearly will help sustain excellence even when major changes in personnel occur.

Overview

Sharing your PD challenges and successes can be very helpful to others in your school and district as well as to schools and districts in other parts of the country. But sharing information effectively requires you to document your decisions clearly and to put your tools and materials in a form that will make distribution fast and simple.

Most award winners found that staying organized and keeping up with the materials needed to organize and implement PD was a significant task in itself. This was particularly true at the school level. But these actions, they found, were necessary for sharing learning with others.

Document Your Decisions Clearly

Linking each phase of PD to the others—from design to implementation to evaluation and improvement—requires keeping a clear record of decisions. For example, using the PD design goals and measures in the evaluation process required winners to clearly document them and keep them easy to find. This documentation was especially critical in winning schools where leadership changes have occurred. The best way to ensure that each phase is linked is to clarify and record your decisions so that you may revisit them periodically. This strategy is essential for keeping staff, administrators, parents, students, and community all moving in the same direction.

Keep Implementation Materials Organized and Available to Others

Keeping PD materials organized also facilitates sharing with other schools and districts. In some cases, award winners formed partnerships to share PD resources. In other cases, PD leaders shared their work to increase its impact beyond the school or district. In either case, keeping your PD materials organized and available will increase the impact of the innovations you make.

Organizers' Checklist

Share Professional Development Learning

- ❑ Keep a record of PD decisions to guide future decisions.
- ❑ Keep implementation materials organized and available to others.

Conclusion

Award winners, with their diverse backgrounds and resources, took a variety of approaches to creating high-impact professional development. Despite different approaches, they all created a rewarding process for staff and distinguished educational results for students.

Building on the successes of award winners, rather than starting from scratch, can save you time, money, and frustration. By focusing on what winners have in common and by using the lessons from winners' experiences, you can tailor professional development processes to fit your organization's unique qualities. A step-by-step approach to designing, implementing, evaluating/improving, and sharing learning will help you make the most of your efforts to improve staff and student learning in your school or district.

APPENDICES

Appendix A—
U.S. Department of Education Award Criteria and Step-by-Step Actions

Professional Development Activities	Model Professional Development Award Criteria
I. Designing Professional Development A. Include participants and organizers in the professional development design process. B. Make a clear plan that includes: 1. How professional development supports the school/district's long-term plan. 2. A professional development needs assessment process. 3. Professional development goals, including: a. Improving all students' learning. b. Improving teacher effectiveness. c. Setting high standards for teachers. d. Promoting continuous staff learning. e. Enhancing staff intellectual and leadership capacity. 4. Professional development content, process, and activities. 5. Research that supports the chosen content/process for professional development. 6. Resources available to support professional development. 7. Professional development evaluation steps. C. Share the plan with the school community.	• The plan includes a clear description of the infrastructure, content, and process components of professional development. • The plan describes specific content, instructional strategies, and learning activities that are designed to reach the professional development goals. • The plan includes a continuous process for ensuring that the school community understands how the professional development components fit together and connect to the overall school or district improvement plan. • The professional development design includes a comprehensive evaluation. • Professional development goals are clearly stated. • Expected changes in teaching and student learning, which should result from broad participation in professional development, are stated. • Professional development goals focus on improving all students' learning. • Professional development goals are based on needs assessment. • Professional development goals are part of a long-term school improvement plan. • Professional development goals and outcomes focus on increasing teachers' expertise in teaching to high standards. • Professional development goals were developed though an inclusionary process. • The professional development plan meets U.S. Department of Education principles. (See note.)
II. Implementing Professional Development A. Stay abreast of and incorporate best practices into teaching, learning, and leadership. B. Make sure school/district policies and practices support actual professional development implementation for staff. C. Ensure that resources remain available to organize and implement professional development. D. Make professional development part of everyday life at school.	• Professional development activities reflect the best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership. • Organizational structures support the implementation of professional development activities on the individual, collegial, and organizational levels. • Sustained resources (e.g., human, fiscal, and technological) are committed to support the professional development plan. • Professional development is integral to the school culture and promotes continuous inquiry and improvement.

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Professional Development Activities	Model Professional Development Award Criteria
III. Evaluating and Improving Professional Development A. Use professional development design goals to determine evaluation measures and standards for success. B. Clarify who is accountable for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data and for facilitating "professional development next steps" decisions. C. Use evaluation findings to make improvements in professional development. D. Ensure that evaluation criteria include at least: 1. Improvement in teaching. 2. Improvement in student learning. 3. Narrowing of student achievement gaps.	• The school/district has a process for monitoring and documenting the alignment of the school improvement plan(s), professional development activities, and teacher and student outcomes. • The data collected are used to make appropriate programmatic adjustments to professional development. • The data collected provide evidence that the professional development activities lead to improved teaching. • The data collected provide evidence that the professional development activities lead to improved student learning. • The data collected provide evidence that the professional development activities lead to narrowing student achievement gaps.
IV. Sharing Professional Development Learning A. Document your decisions clearly. B. Keep implementation materials organized and available to others.	• The school/district has an adequate description of the program and its components that would be useful to other schools and districts. • The school/district states ways in which others could benefit from what it has learned about professional development.

Note: U.S. Department of Education principles for high-quality professional development are restated and included in the awards criteria. The specific wording of the principles is provided below.

High-quality professional development:

1. Focuses on teachers as central to student learning, yet includes all other members of the school community.
2. Focuses on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement.
3. Respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of teachers, principals, and others in the school community.
4. Reflects the best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership.
5. Enables teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards.
6. Promotes continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools.
7. Is planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate that development.
8. Requires substantial time and other resources.
9. Is driven by a coherent long-term plan.
10. Is evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning, and this assessment guides subsequent professional development efforts.

Appendix B—
Professional Development Resources

National Staff Development Council Web Site
www.nsdc.org

A comprehensive resource for information about professional development is the National Staff Development Council's Web page. In addition to providing information about the Council and its mission, the site contains selected articles from the *Journal of Staff Development*, a well-respected journal devoted to issues surrounding staff training and preparation.

Another excellent resource available through NSDC's online bookstore is *The National Staff Development Council's Standards for Staff Development*, which includes an elementary, middle, and high school edition. Each standard is accompanied by a two-page discussion that includes a rationale, examples, outcomes, discussion questions, references, and space for notes and responses. The document also includes an assessment instrument and suggestions for use.

U.S. Department of Education
Teacher Quality Web Site
www.ed.gov/inits/teachers/teach.html

The Teacher Quality Web page within the U.S. Department of Education Web site includes information about the National Awards Program for Model Professional Development, research reports and links to information about the latest research in professional development, and information about the availability of grants to fund professional development efforts.

Pathways to School Improvement Web Site
www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/pd0cont.htm

NCREL's *Pathways to School Improvement* Web site offers information for schools interested in designing and evaluating effective professional development. The site includes a Trip Planner Inventory that helps schools analyze current practices and points them toward specific resources within the site. This Web site also includes research information on critical professional development issues, such as program evaluation and finding time for professional development.

Achieving Your Vision of Professional Development: How to Assess Your Needs and Get What You Want
SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE)

This "how-to" resource guide offers many tips to help at each stage of building an effective professional development system. The guide includes tips for developing a vision, creating a context for change, planning, investing resources, providing continual assistance, and assessing and monitoring progress. It also includes summaries of the 1997-98 winners of the National Awards Program for Model Professional Development and five examples of model schools. The guide is available through SERVE's online bookstore at www.serve.org/publications/list.htm

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory Web Site
www.nwrel.org

This site provides good information on professional development, including *By Request...June 1998*, which examines the principles of high-quality professional development and provides some guiding questions for selecting activities.

Student Achievement Through Staff Development
Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (1988). White Plains, NY: Longman.

This well-researched guide to staff development includes a training model. The authors stress the importance of follow-up activities and they provide guidelines for developing follow-up components, such as immediate and sustained practice, sharing, and peer observation and coaching.

What to Consider When Evaluating Staff Development
Guskey, T. & Sparks, D. (1991). *Educational Leadership, 49*(3), 73-76.

This article offers a thoughtful and succinct examination of the issues surrounding effective evaluation of professional development activities.

The Federal Regional Educational Laboratories

These sites have current information about professional development and/or related topics (e.g., technology, specific curriculum topics, school management).

Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL)
www.ael.org

Laboratory for Student Success (LSS)
www.temple.edu/departments/LSS

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)
www.mcrel.org

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL)
www.ncrel.org

Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University (LAB at Brown University)
www.lab.brown.edu

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL)
www.nwrel.org

Pacific Resources for Education and learning (PREL)
www.prel.org

SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE)
www.serve.org

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)
www.sedl.org

WestEd
www.wested.org

Appendix C—
National Awards Program for Model Professional Development
Winner Profiles

1996-97

Lawrence Public Schools, Lawrence, Kansas

The Lawrence, Kansas (PreK-12) School District set about to transform professional development in response to the Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) Initiative adopted by the State Board of Education. The QPA holds schools accountable for demonstrating student progress and mandates both site-based councils and school improvement plans. The state also requires that professional development initiatives connect activities with impact on instructional strategies and student achievement. Lawrence volunteered to pilot this accreditation model and has added more schools each year. The central office staff has developed a strong theoretical base for integrating instructional improvement, curriculum development, and professional development.

All schools are now required to craft a school improvement plan each year that details the connection between professional development and student achievement. A local School Inservice Council—composed of teachers, principals, parents, and community representatives—develops the plan and forwards it for review to the Local (district) Inservice Council (LIC), which is composed of teachers from each school, administrators, curriculum coordinators, and early childhood specialists. The LIC meets monthly and provides an opportunity for both oversight and cross-school sharing/collaboration. It is here that an assessment is made concerning the inclusion of state and district goals. Each school must detail plans to use the six half-days set aside by the district for professional development; the district staff plan for two or three additional days. In addition to school plans, teachers submit individual professional development plans that require support beyond that provided in the school plan.

At the end of the year, each school must make a presentation to the LIC detailing the effectiveness of the plan for that year. This "results-based" planning and evaluation focuses attention both on student achievement data and on levels of implementation by teachers of strategies detailed in the school improvement plans.

Samuel W. Mason Elementary School, Roxbury, Massachusetts

Samuel Mason is a controlled-choice school in the Boston Public Schools. The appointment of a new principal in 1990 saved the school from closure. This principal had a vision that incorporated a belief in site-based management and concern for all the students in the building. The groundwork for the professional development model was begun in 1990 with the creation of the School-Based Management/Shared Decision Making Team. The initial focus for this group was school improvement in instruction, curriculum, and assessment.

The Professional Development Team (comprising teachers, principal, and parents) prepares the yearly school improvement plan that aligns professional development activities with the goals for student achievement. All school staff, including the school secretary and principal, are required to complete personal professional development plans.

The commitment of the teachers at Mason to raising the achievement of all students proved to be an important factor in the subsequent development of a professional development model that is

grounded in analyzing student achievement data and using research on best practices to reform instruction. To connect achievement data with professional development activities, grade-level teams monitor data on a four-week cycle. Adjustments are made to the content of the professional development program based on these periodic assessments.

Data from the Metropolitan Achievement Test in Reading Comprehension show that Mason's average three-year gain for grades 2 to 5 surpassed that of the city of Boston. In addition to these measures, work-sampling assessment, portfolios, and twice-yearly exhibits of students' work in writing, art, and science show growth. Under the new leadership, in five years (1991-96), Mason went from the least chosen (79th) to the 12th most selected school in Boston, while more than doubling its enrollment.

San Francisco Unified School District, San Francisco, California

The San Francisco School District serves a major urban community with a very diverse population. The superintendent issued a set of priorities that included raising the achievement of students scoring in the bottom quartile on standardized tests, developing instructional strategies to better meet the needs of all students, and improving the scope and effectiveness of professional development. In addition, a large inflow of new teachers served as a catalyst for the district to develop effective professional development.

The district's framework for professional development combines centralized activities with site-based initiatives. The professional development initiative requires each school to analyze a broad range of student achievement data (disaggregated by factors such as race, gender, and quartile), rethink their curriculum, and create an improvement plan that connects activities with professional development plans. In the 25 professional development "model schools," for example, each school presents a preliminary plan for review to others in this grouping. This critical feedback is used by the planning committees in each school to refine the school improvement plan. This process also provides an opportunity for schools to collaborate and share resources where appropriate. In the spring, each school evaluates its plan and progress toward implementation by creating a portfolio that is once again submitted to peer schools for review.

Eight days are set aside in the school year for professional development. Three are used by the district and follow the format of a summer institute, multiple follow-up sessions, and targeted on-site activities. One day is set aside for special education issues. The remaining four days are available for individual schools to use. Schools are expected to engage in additional professional development activities beyond these four days.

Test scores for reading and math on the CTBS have been used to show the impact of the professional development program. These data show that there has been a significant growth for all students in focus areas.

Wilton Public Schools, Wilton, Connecticut

The Wilton (PreK-12) School District comprises five schools with an enrollment of 3,100 students. A district professional development plan was created beginning in 1990 that aligned a series of district-sponsored activities to district goals. Math and science were the areas of initial emphasis. Focusing attention and support on a few clearly defined improvement activities is an important cornerstone of the Wilton professional development model. An analysis of test data has been the primary catalyst for professional development activities. Scores are analyzed at the district, school, and individual student levels to determine what professional development activities are needed.

School Planning Teams (comprising teachers, administrators, and parents) develop school improvement plans that are driven by four factors: district goals, curricular needs, student assessment data, and teacher performance needs. Historically, two or three initiatives receive attention for two or three years resulting in a series of specific in-house workshops focused on improving teacher effectiveness.

In addition, a District Professional Development Committee (comprising teachers, administrators, and parents and chaired by a full-time teacher holding the title "Instructional Leader for Professional Development") develops the district-sponsored activities based on a district needs assessment survey and discussions concerning best practice. This district committee plans the Professional Development Day, held in August each year. It also plans a series of high-interest strands addressed throughout the year. A bimonthly newsletter, distributed by the district administrator for professional development, lists all the conference and workshop opportunities available in the state and beyond. The district also supports a trainer-of-trainers approach to capacity building. More than 40 teachers currently hold instructional leader roles in addition to their regular teaching responsibilities.

SAT and Connecticut Mastery Test scores show significant gains in target areas and are often at the top of the state.

Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, Manhattan, Kansas

At Woodrow Wilson Elementary, three teachers led a change process that focused all staff on improving student learning in target areas, initially math and science. The impetus for change was the Quality Performance Accreditation initiative adopted by the State Board of Education, which holds schools accountable for demonstrating student progress and mandates both site-based councils and school improvement plans. The state required that schools show the connection between professional development activities and instructional strategies.

The three teachers focused their efforts on directing the faculty to reflect on the meaning and subsequent improvement of low student scores in target areas. With relevant summer training, all teachers embarked on a year-long study of ways to implement the National Council of Teachers' of Mathematics standards schoolwide.

Woodrow Wilson was supported by Kansas State University, which invited Wilson to become a Professional Development School. This initiative involved a number of components that served to focus the energy of the Wilson faculty on developing a plan for professional development and raising questions about ways to improve student performance. A Wilson teacher was appointed Clinical Instructor, with KSU supporting her half-time out of the classroom. KSU faculty worked alongside several Wilson teachers with preservice and inservice teachers. KSU students, working alongside Wilson teachers, sponsored after-school clubs focused on math and science.

Wilson has used a combination of Kansas's assessment tests, curriculum tests, and performance-based tests to monitor the impact of their work in math and problem solving on student achievement. They have posted large gains on the Kansas math tests (especially for girls) and now are using the same professional development strategies to focus on reading and social studies.

1997-98

Ganado Intermediate School, Ganado, Arizona

At Ganado Intermediate School, where nearly all students are Navajo, 64 percent have limited English proficiency, and more than 90 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, faculty and staff are succeeding in efforts to improve student achievement by improving teacher effectiveness.

Concerned about low student scores on achievement tests, Ganado embarked on a school improvement plan several years ago that allows teachers, parents, and others to help make decisions on how to improve learning. Ganado formed partnerships with six colleges and universities, modified schedules to provide uninterrupted blocks of team planning time, and improved instruction and assessment for English-as-a-second-language (ESL) learners. They also integrated learning with the Navajo philosophy of education in order to align the curriculum with local values.

One key to Ganado's staff development program is the Career Ladder, in which individual teachers create three-year professional development plans in consultation with the principal and the grade-level team teachers. The plan focuses on student achievement and states specific criteria for success. Because the faculty and staff also focus on outreach to parents, parent participation reached 100 percent last year, up from very low participation just five years ago.

The investment in professional development has paid off in a number of ways. Over the past five years, Ganado has seen significant gains in student achievement on standardized tests, while maintaining a commitment to include special education students in their test results. Test scores reveal that students with limited English proficiency have made gains in reading and writing, and the achievement gap between boys and girls in the school is narrowing.

Geneva City Schools, Geneva, New York

The culture at Geneva City Schools is one in which professional growth is emphasized and teachers and other staff learn from each other.

Leaders at the district and school levels use data on students and continuous input from teachers to guide investments of time and money for professional development. Forty-five hours of professional development are required annually for all professional staff members. Student results are used to identify areas of needed improvement, target professional development efforts, hold teachers accountable, and monitor school and district progress on a continual basis.

The investment in professional development is paying off. Teachers have been working to reverse three years of declining scores on the state reading exam, and in 1997, 99 percent of third graders, including students with special needs, passed. Sixth-grade reading scores also have improved. In addition, professional development has led to greater understanding of strategies that work to meet the needs of a diverse group of students. Recently, the proportion of students who drop out has declined substantially. Teachers report that as they improve their teaching, students are earning higher test scores, are more motivated to learn, and are more self-disciplined.

H.D. Hilley Elementary School, El Paso, Texas

At H.D. Hilley Elementary, support from the school district, partnerships with outside organizations, and a focus on both students and teachers as learners contribute to the success of the school's professional development. With a population in which 96 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch and many students have limited English proficiency, H.D. Hilley's recent scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills have increased substantially. For example, between 1995 and 1997, the proportion of third graders mastering all objectives on the test increased from 30 to 48 percent.

H.D. Hilley has been able to achieve these improvements in large part because a school improvement team—including teachers, parents, community members, and administrators—determines school improvement goals and how the school will target its professional development resources. Multigrade teams involving all the teachers in the school develop strategies to support the goals, and all professional development efforts are linked to these goals. Teams of teachers meet regularly to identify, secure, and assess their professional development. Teachers believe that improving student learning is the ultimate measure of success.

To involve the community, H.D. Hilley sponsors an active parent outreach center run by parents. Collaboration with the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, the College of Education at the University of El Paso, and the National Science Foundation-funded Urban Systemic Initiative supports the school's professional development activities and commitment to academic excellence.

Hungerford School, Staten Island, New York

At Hungerford, professional development enables teachers; teacher aides; speech, occupational and physical therapists; guidance counselors; administrators; and parents to create improved learning opportunities for all students. The school serves a special-needs population that includes students classified as medically fragile and severely and profoundly retarded.

Among the school's priorities is an annual assessment of student needs designed to guide the school's professional development efforts. Faculty and staff can take advantage of mentoring and site visit opportunities because of a school policy that offers release time for teachers while providing experienced substitutes. Teachers receive one professional development period each day. The school is designated as a Professional Development Laboratory site for the district, hosting teachers and staff from other schools for on-site training. Based on recent assessments of student and teacher needs, many professional development activities have focused on effective strategies for using technology to teach special-needs children.

Hungerford's emphasis on professional development has paid off in student success. The school has seen an 18 percent increase in the number of students participating in general education and a 30 percent increase in the number of students placed at community-based work sites.

International High School at LaGuardia Community College, Long Island City, New York

International High School (IHS) at LaGuardia Community College engages everybody in learning, not just the students. With a high concentration of students from low-income families as well as a large population of recent immigrants who speak 37 different languages, the school has succeeded in narrowing the achievement gap between students with limited English proficiency and those who are native born.

At IHS, the faculty and student body are organized into six interdisciplinary instructional teams. Each team's schedule includes three hours of weekly meeting time. Teachers on the same team observe and coach each other; share best practices; develop, evaluate, and revise curricula; and jointly devise interventions for students who need extra support. While collegial professional development in instructional teams is central, professional development is also focused at individual, school, and multischool levels.

The school's professional development efforts have resulted in student success. Student achievement far exceeds that of other limited-English-proficient students in New York City and compares favorably with more advantaged public schools in the city. In recent years, graduation and attendance rates have increased, and the college acceptance rate exceeds 90 percent each year. In addition, IHS students learn to master English more quickly than do similar students in the city.

Lewisville Independent School District, Lewisville, Texas

The goal of the Lewisville Independent School District is to provide a learning environment that allows all students to reach their full potential. The district believes that the most critical factor in reaching this goal is providing well-prepared teachers who function as learners and teachers. That is why Lewisville has designed and implemented a professional development program that is grounded in research and based on student needs.

The district and its schools develop goals through a comprehensive planning process that includes the analysis of state-level achievement data. A team structure allows teachers to help set school goals, and professional development focuses on reaching these goals. All employees in the district are included in the district's professional development program. Staff members attend eight daylong professional development activities each year, in addition to other opportunities. The district also develops leadership capacity among its teachers by allowing exemplary teachers to play leadership roles with their peers instead of bringing in outside experts. Evaluation focuses on evidence that the newly learned strategies are being used and that student achievement is increasing.

Lewisville's investment in staff development has led to positive results for its students. Teachers are learning how to analyze individual results from the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills to match their instructional strategies to individual student needs. Between 1995 and 1997, scores on the reading, mathematics, and writing tests improved at all grade levels, and the achievement gaps between Hispanic, African-American, and white students narrowed.

Montview Elementary School, Aurora, Colorado

At Montview Elementary, teachers see themselves as lifelong learners with an individual and collective responsibility to improve student achievement. A strong, coherent professional development plan enables them to accomplish this goal.

Because Montview engages in site-based decision making, teachers are integral to all planning and decisions. The school's goal is to ensure success for all children by expanding teachers' understanding of how children learn. When Montview began its restructuring efforts five years ago, the school decided to focus on improving student literacy. Teachers participate in summer learning institutes and four school-based inservice days each year, but they also have regular opportunities for observation, coaching, reflection, and dialogue. Teachers polish their skills through weekly coaching sessions with a teacher leader. On a quarterly basis, each teacher discusses the progress of his or her students with a leadership team made up of an administrator, the teacher's peer "coach," and a team of specialists.

Montview's professional development efforts help the school meet the learning needs of a diverse and highly transient student population that includes a high concentration of low-income families. Between 1995 and 1997, student scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills increased in reading, language, and math. Performance gaps have been virtually eliminated between white, Hispanic, and African-American students. Teachers report growth in their abilities to assess student progress in reading and writing, and to diagnose, plan, and support students' learning needs more effectively.

Shallowford Falls Elementary School, Marietta, Georgia

Shallowford Falls is a good school that is determined to get even better. Teachers believe that success in their own classrooms depends on the success of all of the other classrooms. The entire faculty, in consultation with parents and the community, establishes school goals. The professional development program emphasizes improving the instructional program, with a focus on literacy throughout the curriculum. All staff members are included in professional development activities, and teachers have gradually taken ownership of and responsibility for school improvement efforts. Staff teams meet regularly to examine individual teacher needs and determine the best ways to address those needs.

Professional development activities include overnight staff retreats and small, focused study groups. Teachers try new practices in their classrooms and then examine the results with other teachers. The school has a very low teacher turnover rate in part because new staff members are hired through an interview process that involves teachers. Veteran teachers also help new staff members incorporate effective strategies into their practice.

Shallowford Falls' focus on professional development, along with its adoption of student achievement goals based on its staff's analysis of student data, has led to impressive results. On the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the school's third and fifth graders have significantly increased their scores in reading, language, and mathematics over the past three years.

1998-99

Carroll Independent School District, Southlake, Texas

Carroll ISD is a small but rapidly expanding suburban district with an annual growth rate for the past two years of roughly 15 percent. While Carroll ISD may not be as ethnically diverse as other districts, teachers are faced with a wide range of academic diversity. Therefore, professional development activities are designed to improve achievement for all students by focusing on problem solving, critical thinking, strategic learning, self-evaluation, and love of learning.

Carroll ISD's STAR model for professional development is based on continuous improvement at the individual, campus, and district levels. It is a cohesive plan that begins with preservice and includes veteran teachers, administrators, university faculty, parents, business, and community partners. Major goals include: (1) improving teacher preparation and induction; (2) providing support for novice teachers; (3) enhancing the mentoring and coaching process; (4) supporting administrators as instructional leaders; and (5) including parents and community members as partners in learning so that student achievement is improved.

All site-based teams are trained in data analysis, goal setting, and staff development planning. Each campus submits a yearly professional development plan indicating objectives, activities, estimated costs, the model of staff development used, measures of success, and other additional needs.

Over the past five years, test scores, including those for special-needs students, have continued to rise as a result of this focus on data analysis. There has been an increase in the number of students taking AP courses and in the scores on the AP exams. SAT and ACT scores also have continued to rise, as well as the scores on TASS—the state criterion-referenced test.

Edmonds School District No. 15, Lynnwood, Washington

The Edmonds School District is a diverse suburban district committed to data-based decision making in all areas including professional development.

Edmond's professional development is a districtwide change model that was originally created to restructure mathematics and was tested as part of a National Science Foundation grant. In the initial development of the model, "teacher leaders" were prepared and supported to work with their peers as facilitators of change. The model has since evolved to address all areas of teaching and learning and has been aligned with the district's performance-based, standards-based educational system.

All educators now have the opportunity to meet together to learn, discuss, and share new ideas and classroom experiences that go well beyond the typical one-shot training workshops. The plan addresses both districtwide and building goals while providing opportunities for individual professional growth. The plan provides opportunities to: (1) give and receive feedback; (2) engage in educational research and development; (3) synthesize new educational research; (4) recognize and stimulate exemplary professional performance; (5) pursue advanced degrees; (6) induct new employees; (7) develop new teaching skills; (8) make the best use of new technologies; (9) teach other colleagues; and (10) use mentoring to enhance training.

Evaluations show that "teacher leaders" made substantial changes in their beliefs and practices, including how they organized their classrooms, how they taught, and how they observed, assessed, and recorded students' performance. The support of "teacher leaders" has helped all teachers make visible changes in their classrooms, in their use of materials, and in their teaching.

In addition, student performance data supports the effectiveness of the plan. Math scores increased from 1995 to 1998 in every grade tested. Results in language, reading, and math have steadily improved over the past four years as well.

Norman Public Schools, Norman, Oklahoma

Professional development is not a program or an event, but a way of life for the staff at Norman Public Schools. Norman, Oklahoma, is a community of approximately 100,000 built on a commitment to education shown through its support of the public schools, a major university, and other institutions related to education and training. With this professional emphasis, community expectations for student achievement in Norman are high and involvement in the educational process is extensive. To meet these high expectations, in 1985 the Norman Schools raised the level of importance placed on professional development for all staff. As a result, the district created Decisions for Excellence, a framework for professional development targeted toward improved teaching and learning.

The Norman Public Schools supports research-based professional development, so Decisions for Excellence is consistently updated using current research and best practices. Decisions for Excellence currently has four major components: "Processes" for effecting change, "Procedures" for participatory decision making regarding teaching and learning, and the "Program" for improving instruction, all targeted toward the "Product" of student learning. Each component is supported with district resources and committed staffs to strengthen district direction, address school site improvement goals, and develop individual teachers and administrators as outstanding leaders dedicated to improving student achievement. The structure encourages decision making at the level of need and provides flexibility as information and best practices become available.

Standardized test scores demonstrate how subject- and method-specific professional development has succeeded. The percentages of fifth-grade students passing the state performance-based writing, math, and science assessments significantly increased between 1995 and 1998. Similar gains were seen at grades 8 and 11. ACT test scores also demonstrate academic gains as the average composite score increased from 21.7 percent in 1992-93 to 22.8 percent in 1997-98. Evidence of success also is revealed in the decreased numbers of suspensions and absences.

Olathe District Schools, Olathe, Kansas

Continuous inquiry and improvement are embedded into the culture of the Olathe Unified School District, a large suburban school district outside of Kansas City that serves 19,613 students. Olathe has received numerous accolades, including earning, for three consecutive years, a Gold Medal ranking from *Expansion Management* magazine for being one of the best public school districts in the nation. The U.S. Department of Education also has identified 12 schools in the district as Blue Ribbon Schools. Olathe believes that their professional development program, in place since the early 90s, is the primary reason for their success.

The district's professional development process uses an informed, collaborative decision-making approach that respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of their teachers. The organization as a whole, and each school individually, must evaluate current status and baseline data, establish goals, and develop school improvement and building staff development plans to achieve desired outcomes. These five-year action plans include anticipated outcomes, research-based strategies, necessary resources, documentation of improvement, a monitoring timeline, and identification of professional growth opportunities.

Olathe's focus on professional development has led to improvement in reading, math, and writing, and a narrowing in the gap between students of differing socioeconomic status, opposite their state

trends. Year-to-year academic data for the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the Kansas math assessment, and the ACT show an overall increase in math at all levels—elementary, junior high, and high school. This student data ultimately guides Olathe's professional development decisions. Their comprehensive and constantly improving program has had a powerful impact on their ability to achieve their vision: "Students prepared for THEIR future."

Sprayberry High School, Marietta, Georgia

Sprayberry is a suburban high school outside of Atlanta that opened in 1952 to serve a principally rural community; however, the school population is now drawn from more suburban neighborhoods. The past six years have seen a sizeable influx of ethnically diverse families, many of whom speak English as a second language.

Over the past seven years, Sprayberry has been transformed from an average school to a school of excellence. The basic vehicle for change has been the adoption of site-based management that made teachers and the administration equal partners in school improvement. Sprayberry's teachers are now empowered to assume leadership roles in designing their own professional development. Sprayberry set goals and creates a staff plan by:

- Disaggregating data to identify areas of need.
- Investigating current educational studies to select research-based strategies for improving instruction.
- Designing staff development programs to train teachers in best practices for improving student performance.
- Conducting ongoing reviews of progress.

Consistent improvement in the SAT and Georgia High School Exit Exam scores reflect the success of Sprayberry's staff development program. In seven years, the SAT composite score has grown from 1004 to 1025, well above the national average. The Exit Exam has seen consistent gains in four out of five areas during a time of changing demographics. The combination of focus on teaching to improve critical thinking skills and the infusion of technology into both instruction and student-centered activities has led to across-the-board gains for all achievement levels and ethnic groups.

Spring Woods Senior High School, Houston, Texas

Spring Woods is a large urban high school in Houston, Texas. In the past few years the student population has greatly diversified and changed the instructional and professional development needs of the school.

Spring Woods staff reviewed their campus data and surveyed students and parents to determine how to meet the unique instructional and motivational needs of their culturally diverse student population. They established a "schoolwide leadership cadre" comprising parents, administrators, and teachers from all disciplines and grade levels to study whole-school change. The resulting professional development plan established these goals: more inclusive, relevant, and challenging instructional practices; collaborative, job-embedded learning and enhanced communication among adults; and parent involvement that encourages diverse representation and participation in meaningful decisions and activities.

The cadre has helped create a professional development initiative based on a motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching and learning. While the framework includes new teaching

strategies, it also serves as a template for recognizing existing strengths in an educator's instructional practice and providing clues for developing those strengths. Descriptive data from classroom observations, lesson plans, interviews, and faculty feedback are used to determine the impact of professional development on teacher practice.

Student academic achievement has improved for all ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Math scores have increased from 22.2 percent to a proficiency level of 77.3 percent. In addition, instructional improvements in English and social studies contributed to an increase in reading scores of 23.1 percent with 86 percent of students achieving passing scores. Writing scores have also improved 10.9 percent to reach 85.2 percent of students passing. Climate surveys, increased student attendance, and decreased dropout rates and discipline referral data also show improved student behavior and attitudes.

Wherry Elementary School, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Wherry is a K-5 public school in Albuquerque, New Mexico, situated on Kirtland Air Force Base, but drawing two-thirds of its 645 students from outside of the base. The student population is diverse, with 15 percent classified as limited English proficient. In addition, 15 percent also are recipients of special education services.

The professional development program at Wherry is predicated on their principal's belief that teacher expertise is the single most important factor affecting student achievement. To initiate their program, Wherry teachers examined their students' low achievement on standardized measures in literacy and decided to focus their professional improvement on research pertaining to literacy development, assessments that guide instruction, and proven teaching strategies. They made time for professional development activities by voluntarily lengthening the school day by ten minutes, freeing full days throughout the year. Study groups, monthly mini-inservices, and individual consultations provide additional support. Teachers continually review student data and conduct needs assessments to determine next learning steps.

Teachers speak openly of how dramatically their instructional practices have changed since they began their efforts in 1994. In an anonymous survey to determine the extent of literacy instructional strategy usage, teachers reported significant use of new strategies. Teachers are more willing to be observed by colleagues and willingly give up prep time in order to fund professional development.

Between 1994 and 1998, standardized test scores in literacy rose from 33 to 57 percent, writing assessment scores rose from 2.02 to 2.96 (on a 1-6 scale), and teachers report (and the principal observes) dramatic changes in the way instruction is delivered.

Appendix D—
What the Research Says About Professional Development That Works

By Lucy Steiner

Recent efforts to improve education through reforms such as school-based management, the introduction of standards, and schoolwide restructuring have focused renewed attention on professional development. The traditional inservice program in which teachers are released a few times a year for a half-day to attend sessions that focus on topics ranging from classroom management to using technology effectively is no longer considered adequate. This shift has led to questions about how schools and districts can develop comprehensive, effective professional development programs that clearly lead to improved student learning and performance.

Since 1997, The U.S. Department of Education has sponsored the National Awards Program for Model Professional Development to encourage and reward schools and districts that have successfully implemented high-impact professional development. The award criteria include demonstration not only of one-time improved student performance, but also of underlying organizational and professional development elements that are critical for sustained teacher and student performance. Criteria are organized around the design, implementation, evaluation/improvement, and sharing of professional development. This literature review focuses on the design, implementation, and evaluation/improvement steps.

The literature on professional development offers compelling support for the criteria used by the National Awards Program. This strong support indicates that reworking existing professional development programs and funding new efforts to meet these criteria should lead to positive student outcomes. The review is organized in the order of steps that schools and districts would take to organize and implement successful professional development.

Step One: Designing Professional Development

Include Participants and Organizers in the Professional Development Design Process

Inclusion of the people most directly affected by professional development enhances the content and ensures the acceptance of new approaches. Too often, school leaders undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of professional development by failing to include participants in planning and delivery (Corcoran, 1995).

Viewing professional development as a process, rather than as a project or an event, requires a major shift in planning. According to Little (1997), staff development in the most successful schools is no longer the domain of a district-level curriculum supervisor. Instead, it is organized to give teachers the authority and resources to take charge of their own learning. Three years of field work in diverse secondary schools led McLaughlin (1994) to conclude that meaningful professional development does not take place during workshops and inservice day presentations, but in the context of professional communities that have been locally developed to be responsive to teachers' needs. A study of the effects of three different governance options in professional development conducted by Joyce et al. (1989) concludes that programs jointly governed (by individual staff, schools, and the district) were perceived as valuable by educators, because decisions had been made democratically.

This is not to say that leaving professional development entirely in the hands of local schools will necessarily lead to improvement. Limited time, funds, and expertise will always leave gaps that districts, states, and other large entities can fill. As Guskey and Peterson (1996) point out in their review of the effects of school-based decision making, teachers work under demanding conditions that often make it impossible for them to keep abreast of the latest research on ways to improve student learning. Thus, the best professional development will involve all those who have something important to bring to the table, and the participatory process will begin in the design stage.

Make a Clear Plan That Includes How Professional Development Supports the School/District's Long-Term Plan

Outstanding professional development is well planned. Planning helps ensure that professional development leads directly to achievement of state, district, school, and professional development outcome goals. Planning also ensures that professional development takes advantage of the best information (via needs assessments, ongoing evaluation, and current research) and resources (time and money).

Sparks and Richardson (n.d.) contend that "successful school reform results when individual and organizational goals are aligned and coherent" (p.16). Good professional development activities are designed to ensure that individual teacher performance supports already established goals for student learning. After studying numerous schools in the midst of restructuring, Little (1997) concluded that establishing manageable goals and priorities in the face of the enormous number of external demands on schools is a formidable task, but a necessary one if real change is to be accomplished. She asserts that highly effective schools are those that are able to weather the conflicting policy mandates and practices to which they are subjected and maintain a clear path with well-established goals.

In order for professional development to be perceived as important by teachers, Little advises that these goals must respond to genuine schoolwide needs. For example, adapting the curriculum to address the increasing numbers of non-English-speaking immigrants and mainstreamed special education students are visibly important professional development focus points for staff. More specifically, a case study conducted by Venezky and Winfield (1979) that is often cited in the school effectiveness literature found that schoolwide staff development closely tied to the school's instructional goals in reading led to change in educators' attitudes and behaviors. Thus, linking professional development to the educational goals of the school or district is essential for achieving significant change.

Make a Clear Plan That Includes a Professional Development Needs Assessment Process

State, district, and school goals establish the ultimate success measures for professional development, but the content of professional development must focus on the gap between those goals and reality. A sound professional development program will include an assessment of the gaps in student learning and in teacher competence. An assessment of student learning gaps (actual performance versus goals) reveals the content and process areas in which teachers must excel in a particular school. An assessment of teacher competence tells us how well equipped teachers are in those content and process areas.

The methods of assessing students' and teachers' needs are varied. One way to determine teachers' needs is through self-assessment. Extensive case studies in Washington state convinced Duke et. al (as cited in Collins, 1998) that teachers feel a greater sense of commitment to change and more interest in participation when attention is paid to these assessments. However, in their studies comparing teachers' self-perceived instructional needs and needs assessments obtained through other means, Jones and Hayes (1980) found that many surveys of teachers' needs are really lists of problems, dilemmas, concerns, and wants. These lists, according to Guskey (1999), are typically "symptoms of needs" that should be diagnosed more thoroughly to identify underlying causes.

In his guide to professional development, Collins (1998) suggests students' needs can be readily identified by examining grades, test scores, discipline referrals, and work samples. As Guskey (1999) points out, however, these needs must be more deeply analyzed to make sure that schoolwide (not just individual) needs are accurately identified. This analysis allows for planning of common events, such as workshops, and for team effort by staff to close common student-learning and teacher-skill gaps.

Make a Clear Plan That Includes Professional Development Goals

Improving all students' learning. There is general agreement in the literature that the central goal of every professional development effort should be to improve all students' learning (Guskey, 1999; Joyce & Showers, 1988). Once this overarching goal has been established, the materials, content, processes, and evaluations of professional development efforts can be measured according to whether they support this goal. Components that fail to improve student learning can be dropped or redesigned (Guskey, 1999).

One challenge can be getting teachers to focus on all students rather than being content to have a select group of successful learners. Lezotte and Jacobe (as cited by the National Staff Development Council, 1995) studied disaggregated student outcome data in numerous schools in order to find schools that were successful with all students. They concluded that schools should collect student data on the basis of socioeconomic level, race, and gender during the planning stage, as well as later. This method, they assert, would help staff focus up front on the need to improve student learning across the board.

Improving teacher effectiveness. According to Dennis Sparks (1994), executive director of the National Staff Development Council, increasing teacher effectiveness is necessary to improve student learning. However, the definition of "effective" continues to evolve and to vary from place to place. For example, many teachers are being asked to shift from a behaviorist teaching approach, in which students are passive recipients of knowledge, to a constructivist model in which teachers actively engage students in the construction of knowledge (Corcoran, 1995).

Demands on teachers also depend upon changing state and district policies towards schools. A report by the Southern Regional Education Board (1998) asserts that effective professional development is needed to increase teachers' understanding of challenging content standards, the higher expectations states have for all students, and new methods of assessment, instruction, and accountability.

Setting high standards for teachers. Raising expectations is a well-demonstrated method for improving staff performance results across industries (Weiss & Hartle, 1997) and education is no exception. Reform initiatives have been introduced in almost every state to require that teachers improve their expertise in teaching to high standards. Corcoran (1995) codirected a study of state policies and alternative approaches to professional development. He maintains that the skills needed for teaching to high standards are complex and many. Teachers must: (a) improve their knowledge of subject matter; (b) develop new assessments to determine students' understanding of content; and (c) enable their students to apply their knowledge to real-world problems. Darling-Hammond (as quoted by Lewis, 1997a), executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, agrees. She asserts that improved understanding of content areas is essential, and adds that high standards also require teachers to create curriculum that addresses students' styles and experiences.

Promoting continuous staff learning and enhancing staff intellectual and leadership capacity. These two goals are closely tied, as they both require a strong commitment to developing teachers to their full potential over the long term.

The concept of "continuous learning," popularized by Senge (1990), is one that has been adopted in numerous organizational settings. It applies well to education professionals. Teachers participating in The Teachers Network's National Teacher Policy Institute [NTPI] (1997) concluded after a year of study and collaboration that effective professional development programs promote "an environment that values and nurtures learning and achievement for both teachers and students." They further suggest that making professional development an integral, or embedded, part of the normal working school day gives teachers the time for inquiry, reflection, and mentoring that is necessary for long-term change in practice. Fullan and Miles (1992) further argue that if a practice is to be implemented well, it should become a natural part of the teacher's repertoire of professional skills. This, of course, requires practice and repeated refinement, which are possible only if teachers have motive and opportunity to make continuous improvements.

The methods for promoting staff learning, intellectual development, and leadership skills are varied. McLaughlin and Talbert (1993) found in a five-year case study of nearly 900 educators that teachers who belonged to strong professional communities were better able to adapt to the challenges of teaching today's students. Instead of enforcing traditional practices or lowering expectations, these teachers transformed their practice to work interactively with students. As part of a professional community, they had access to curricula frameworks, guidelines for practice, and new teaching materials and strategies. They also had support for the risk taking and struggle entailed in transforming practice.

One way to give teachers access to new materials and methods is described by Murphy (1999). A staff development specialist, she consults with schools to develop whole-faculty study groups. These groups of no more than six staff address school needs that are determined by data collection. They investigate possi-

ble responses and make recommendations to the school. Other suggestions for increasing staff intellectual and leadership capacity include increasing teachers' access to university libraries and to technology facilities and courses, without requiring that they enter into degree programs (NTPI, 1997).

Make a Clear Plan That Includes Professional Development Content, Process, and Activities

Planning for professional development includes determining the content of activities, how content will be presented, and how these components support the professional development goals that have been established. Studies of teacher perceptions of success (McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978; Lortie, 1975) support the conclusion that teachers define success in terms of their ability to improve student learning. Therefore, professional development activities that offer teachers practical ideas that can be used to improve student learning outcomes are likely to be successful and well received by teachers (Guskey, 1986).

Once the content has been determined, several models exist for structuring professional development activities. Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) have examined many professional development strategies and organized them into five models, which they rank according to the outcomes they most effectively produce. For example, schools that want staff to master a specific skill are advised that observation is an effective model for increasing mastery. Determining during the planning stage what kind of professional development activities best meet staff members' specific needs is likely to result in effective use of professional development time.

Make a Clear Plan That Includes Research That Supports the Chosen Content/Process for Professional Development

During the planning stage, schools and districts must demonstrate that the content and delivery processes of professional development are supported by adult-learning research. (While student-learning research will greatly affect the content of teacher development, adult-learning research should guide the process of teacher development.)

For example, one theory in the adult education literature is andragogy. Malcolm Knowles (1984) is credited with developing this theory, which includes several assumptions about adult learners: (a) they are self-directed; (b) their experiential base is a rich resource; and (c) their readiness to learn is linked to what they need to know to fulfill their roles as adults. Having offered this description of adult learners, he suggests that instructors should view adult learners as mutual partners in the learning process.

Schools must be vigilant about ensuring that practical implementation of professional development reflects this adult-learning knowledge. One researcher conducted a study of whether teachers actually teach adults using methods different from those used to teach children. Gorham (1985) found that, although teachers reported teaching differences that were in line with the approaches suggested by Knowles, there was little evidence in classroom observations that they were actually using these methods. The majority of teachers continued to use directive behavior with adults. The implications for those choosing professional development trainers is clear: Schools that value teacher development need to select trainers for their ability to provide this type of student-centered instruction. Our understanding of what works in adult education will move forward over time, and schools need to stay abreast of changes to ensure that professional development reflects the best practices currently available.

Make a Clear Plan That Includes Resources Available to Support Professional Development

Two of the most important resources to consider in planning professional development activities are time and money. Little's (1982) analysis of successful schools identifies the time teachers spend on critical activities as a distinguishing characteristic of these schools. Those critical activities include learning new skills, working with students, planning and preparing, and working collaboratively.

Finding this time is challenging and involves making difficult choices. Reflecting on his experiences as an educator, district administrator, and researcher, Collins (1998) notes some of the ways districts have "found" additional time, including the following: extending the school day or the school year, rescheduling teachers' time, and reassigning staff to provide release time. Each choice has its positives and negatives, but what is clear is that making these decisions during the design phase is essential if professional development is going to have a lasting impact.

According to Collins (1998), money to support professional development may include funds for substitutes or materials, stipends for teachers who work additional hours, and consultant fees. Sources for that money vary from district to district and may include school-based funds, district-funded projects and grants, school improvement funds, and external agency grants and programs. Again, the choices are many, but the key is to identify long-term funding sources during the design phase so professional development efforts are not sidetracked by a lack of funding.

Make a Clear Plan That Includes Professional Development Evaluation Steps

All too often evaluation is merely an expensive and time-consuming process that occurs at the end of a professional development activity and does not necessarily lead to changes. In contrast, effective evaluation is an opportunity to increase the direct impact on teacher effectiveness of professional development time and funds. Effective evaluation must be built into the process from the beginning. It is a primary source of input about the future direction of professional development.

Guskey and Sparks (1991) reviewed the literature supporting the importance of program content, program quality, and context. They built a model that describes how these three elements affect the professional development activity's ability to produce changes in student outcomes. Given the complexity of this process, they recommend that evaluation of professional development design should begin during planning and continue throughout the implementation and follow-up phases (Guskey, 1998; Guskey & Sparks, 1991). Guskey (1999) further advises that the goals of all professional development activities be linked from the beginning to a description of how success will be measured and documented. This link is critical for ensuring that evaluation actively contributes to the ultimate goals of the school and district, rather than merely adding an administrative task.

Share the Plan With the School Community

The school community includes students, teachers, other staff, parents, and any others who are concerned with student learning. Both for the substantive input they can offer and for the support they can lend to teachers, each member of the school community needs to know the basic elements of professional development.

After reviewing research studies on the conditions that are necessary for lasting educational improvement, Guskey and Sparks (1991) conclude that although teachers and administrators are the prime targets of professional development efforts, any school employee who has an effect on student learning should also be included. Once a professional development design has been developed, it should be shared with the school community and all participants should be given a chance to comment on the design. Once plans are finalized, professional development planners who share the basic plan with the rest of the school community will likely build support for their efforts.

Step Two: Implementing Professional Development

Stay Abreast of and Incorporate Best Practices into Teaching, Learning, and Leadership

Once a professional development effort has been launched, organizers and participants should ensure that activities continue to reflect best practices. The National Staff Development Council (1995) recommends that the groups and individuals identified in the original design as responsible for ongoing research and inquiry must establish standards to guide their search for potential programs, and they must have a means for reporting findings to professional development organizers. Their work will not be easy. As Guskey (1999) and Slavin and Fashola (1998) point out, finding innovations and approaches that are thoroughly researched and proven in practice to improve student learning can be quite challenging.

Whole-faculty study teams have had documented success collecting ongoing information on best practices. In her work as a staff development specialist for ATLAS Communities (one of the New American Schools designs), Murphy (1999) has found that the study group process provides teachers with a straightforward format for investigating new practices. This method, when it is targeted appropriately, improves what teachers and students do in classrooms.

Make Sure School/District Policies and Practices Support Actual Professional Development Implementation for Staff in Schools

School and district policies and practices have a profound effect on the success or failure of professional development efforts. In his study of four school change projects, Pink (as cited in Fullan, 1990) determined that several harmful district actions acted as barriers to change. They included: (a) a lack of sustained central office support and follow-through; (b) district tendencies toward faddism and quick-fix solutions; and (c) lack of technical assistance and other forms of intensive staff development.

Little (1997) also cites teacher isolation—from information, competing ideas, and productive criticism—as a major threat to professional learning. Her finding is supported by the work of John Goodlad. In his study of teaching conditions in hundreds of schools, Goodlad (1984) describes how school culture and class schedules often conspire to make discussion, classroom visits, and joint planning difficult. Yet, according to an influential study of schools in the midst of desegregation conducted by Little (1982), having teachers work together is critical to improving student learning. Joyce and Showers (1988) support this point of view. Their investigation into the impact of coaching on long-term implementation provided compelling evidence that coaching and observation help teachers put new ideas into practice.

Providing adequate support and opportunity for collaboration is an ongoing challenge for professional development organizers. This challenge makes active identification and removal of barriers to professional development critical for schools and districts.

Ensure That Resources Remain Available to Organize and Implement Professional Development

Effective implementation of the professional development plan is essential for translating development efforts into classroom results. Good implementation requires ongoing commitment of time and financial resources. Huberman and Miles (1984) confirmed the importance of ongoing assistance in their detailed examination of 12 case studies of innovation. "Large-scale, change-bearing innovations lived or died by the amount and quality of assistance that their users received once the change process was underway ..." (p. 273).

More recently, the experience of the New American Schools has further strengthened the argument that implementation support is critically important to effect school change in general. According to researchers at RAND (Bodilly, Keltner, Purnell, Reichardt, & Schuyler, 1998), a key finding of the demonstration phase of the project was that schools need a significant amount of ongoing professional development and materials geared to the design to successfully change teacher practice. The researchers also found that having consistent leaders send clear signals about the high priority to be placed on change efforts was critical, as were nonverbal messages conveyed through allocation of time and money. In schools that experienced a change in leadership and shifting budget priorities, reform efforts were slowed. Pink's (as cited in Fullan, 1990) study of barriers to innovation cites inadequate funding as a major barrier to successful long-term implementation. According to Cohen and Hill's (as cited in Guskey, 1999) study of mathematics reform in California, one of the most important supports teachers can receive is time to reflect and practice the new skill or idea.

Making more time for teachers to focus on their own development often costs money, and maintaining the financial support needed to do this can be challenging. Yet it is one critical element of professional development that leads to long-term results.

Make Professional Development Part of Everyday Life at School

As professional development experts Joyce, Wolf, and Calhoun state in their 1993 book, *The Self-Renewing School*, effective professional development is embedded in the everyday life of teachers, providing opportunities for continuous growth. Joyce and Showers' (1988) research demonstrates that the traditional "inservice day" rarely influences long-term practice. They have found that when teachers are given no support after an initial training workshop, 90 percent of the investment in instructional improvement is lost. They further suggest that it may take up to 20 follow-up and coaching sessions for teachers to successfully implement a new practice. In another study, Armor et al. (as cited in Purkey & Smith, 1983) studied 20 Los Angeles schools participating in a special reading program. They found that schools successful in raising reading scores provided ongoing inservice training of teachers, with staff input and informal opportunities for teachers to compare progress and concerns.

School leaders can institutionalize professional development by altering the schedule to allow time for ongoing staff development in the form of team planning, joint discussion of student work, data collection, and peer coaching (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Also important is providing incentives for teachers to pursue new strategies over time. One method for doing this is to determine and report the results of professional growth activities on an ongoing basis so that teachers have the information and motivation they need to continue effective practices (Guskey, 1999). This combination of making time available and encouraging ongoing change makes development more central to teachers' daily work.

Step Three: Evaluating and Improving Professional Development

Use Professional Development Design Goals to Determine Evaluation Measures and Standards for Success

According to Mullins (1994), the evaluation design should be based on the intended outcomes of the overall school improvement effort. If the school improvement plan has clear objectives expressed in terms of student outcomes, then the evaluation of professional development can be tied to those outcomes.

Using the design goals as the ultimate measures of success will answer the question Is our professional development working? However, schools may also want to answer these questions: Why is or isn't our program working? and How can we change it to be better?

To answer these questions, it is not enough simply to measure student achievement both before and after the fact. Schools also need to measure underlying factors that affect the success of professional development efforts so that changes needed in the development process can be identified. Guskey and Sparks' (1991) comprehensive article on evaluating professional development recommends that a variety of factors be assessed as part of a thorough evaluation. Those factors include the content of the professional development program, the quality of the activities that are used to introduce the content, and the effect school culture has on implementation.

Clarify Who Is Accountable for Collecting, Analyzing, and Reporting Data and for Facilitating "Professional Development Next Steps" Decisions

At the beginning of the planning process, an evaluation team should be appointed and given responsibility for evaluating each program (Mullins, 1994). Once this team is established, it should make decisions about collecting, analyzing, and reporting data. Guskey and Sparks (1991) suggest that evaluators collect multiple types of data, both quantitative and qualitative. The results of all evaluations should be shared at regular meetings and presented in a format that can be understood by everyone (Guskey, 1999).

The evaluation team may or may not be the right one for facilitating decisions about next steps. This role may best be assumed by the professional development organizers, the principal, or teachers. In any case, schools and districts should clearly assign accountability for ensuring that evaluation data is used to improve professional development.

Use Evaluation Findings to Make Improvements in Professional Development

Traditionally, most professional development evaluations take place immediately following an activity or program and are summative in nature. The research suggests, however, that if the activity or program lasts several weeks or more, another type of evaluation should be introduced to help organizers improve professional development as it is taking place: formative evaluation (Cook & Fine, 1997).

Formative evaluation is conducted by the evaluation team and requires members to gather information continuously through observation and written feedback. Collins (1998) describes the advantages of using formative evaluation by noting that it can be used to improve the quality of a professional development program as it is being implemented by allowing schools to make adjustments in structure, pace, content, and presentation.

Ensure That Evaluation Criteria Include at Least: (a) Improvement in Teaching, (b) Improvement in Student Learning, and (c) Narrowing of Student Achievement Gaps

Improvement in teaching. Student learning is unlikely to improve without improvements in teaching, namely teachers' knowledge, skills, practices, and, eventually, their attitudes and beliefs (Guskey, 1986). Therefore, determining the overall effectiveness of a professional development program must involve an assessment of teacher change on all of these levels. Guskey and Sparks (1991) recommend using pre- and posttests, exit interviews, and questionnaires to evaluate changes in participants' knowledge base. Improvement in skills and practices can be assessed through observation, interviews, and self-assessment checklists. And finally, changes in attitudes and beliefs can be determined through interviews, questionnaires, and an analysis of records such as minutes of meetings.

Improvement in student learning. In their synthesis of current research, Hawley and Valli (as cited in Lewis, 1997b) identified several characteristics of effective professional development, including the fact that good designs use multiple measures to determine how professional development affects student outcomes. Guskey and Sparks (1991) agree that it is not enough to measure students' learning gains by their scores on achievement tests. They recommend that evaluators use teacher-developed tests, student portfolios, and course grades as well. To measure behavioral outcomes, they suggest that evaluators use observation, interviews, school records such as attendance rates, and questionnaires.

Narrowing of student achievement gaps. According to Little (1997), an important test of professional development is to assess its ability to respond to schoolwide problems, such as the disparities in performance between children of more affluent families and children of lower-income families. Corcoran (1995) voices a similar concern when he suggests that standards be developed for schools and professional development providers to ensure that funds are targeted and well used, particularly in schools that serve high-risk students. He points out that teachers of at-risk students are especially in need of quality professional development because they work under the most difficult conditions, have less time for collegial interaction, and have fewer opportunities to improve their practice.

Conclusion

In summary, the literature offers strong support that the U.S. Department of Education's National Awards Program's criteria are ones that should lead to education success. While the implementation specifics will vary across schools and districts, these criteria are important guideposts for educators and professional development experts.

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